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VICTORY OR CHAOS?

IN the finest hour of 1940 Mr. Churchill assured the people of Europe that "the shattering of Nazi power will bring to them all immediate food, freedom and peace." The Preamble to the UNRRA Declaration of November, 1943, made even more detailed promises, which the BBC has repeated a thousand times to the occupied people of Europe. The contrast between these promises and the reality—which is that no liberated people have had as much food as they had under German domination and that millions of them are cold, hungry and destitute—has at last begun to stir the public conscience in Allied countries. Last week in the House of Lords Lord Samuel initiated an admirable debate on the needs of liberated Europe; the London Conference of European Socialist Parties, under the chairmanship of Mr. Hugh Dalton, pressed strongly for effective action last week-end; and President Roosevelt's trusted adviser, Judge Samuel Rosenman, has now arrived here with a mission to find out what civilian supplies are most urgently needed in Europe.

Resolutions and enquiries, however, do not feed empty stomachs, and, unless the reason for failure is understood, the delays and frustrations of the past will continue. The fault is not that of UNRRA. So far from being overstaffed, UNRRA will, in fact, need far more personnel if it is to do the job for which it was called into being. The failure was, in the first place, due to the inability of generals to understand that civilians are important, and to allow for their needs in military plans. Thus in Italy, and again in France and Belgium, it was only after every military consideration was satisfied that anyone discovered that the feeding and welfare of the civilian population should have been an integral part of the invasion plans. Secondly, the decision to leave all relief problems in the hands of military government until six months after liberation has meant that all real control has remained in the Combined Supply Boards, and that UNRRA, which has now been allowed to take a hand in supplying Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland and Czechoslovakia, and to give advice in the cases of France and Belgium and Holland (which will pay for their own supplies), is entirely at the mercy of the military authorities who control supplies in Washington. If Europe needs lorries (and no need is so urgent), and if there are tens of thousands rotting in the English countryside; if Europe needs shipping (which is the greatest bottleneck of all) and there are various unused craft which can be made serviceable for channel transport, then many months must pass before a dozen different departments and a score of generals, none of whom is particularly interested in the subject, and all of whom fear to release something that might some day come in useful for military purposes, can be persuaded to furnish a meagre driblet of these urgent necessities.

Sometimes political prejudice adds to delay. The case of Yugoslavia is perhaps the most striking. The Allied military authorities have insisted on the six months of military government before UNRRA could operate, even though Yugoslavia was self-liberated and not occupied by any Allied soldiers. They then demanded that Allied supplies should be accompanied by an unlimited number of "observers" to see that the supplies were properly distributed. After three months' delay, in which many thousands of civilians have died of hunger, the Allies have been persuaded to agree to 300 observers. A much smaller number has, in fact, gone in; they report no difficulty at all about distribution. In the case of Poland and Czechoslovakia the Russians have welcomed the arrival of medical supplies, but there have been delays in procuring visas for UNRRA's officials.

The situation would have been bad even if the war had ended last autumn. It has become catastrophic because vast quantities of Allied shipping which was needed in Europe have been sent to the Pacific, and because the prolonged war has meant far more destruction than was expected in Europe. Before very long, presumably, the full horrors of the Dutch situation will be upon us, and in addition there now opens up the inescapable problem of feeding a large part of Germany. In a special situation like the Dutch, where great towns like Amsterdam and Rotterdam are practically without food, special methods such as the mobilisation of the "little ships" which saved the situation at Dunkirk might be a valuable gesture. Stores of food, saved in this country for the blitz, must be released, and we have no doubt that if an appeal is made to the hundreds of thousands of Americans and British serving behind the lines in France and Belgium, a very considerable contribution would be forthcoming from their ration supplies. But, apart from the need for food, the main necessities are lorries and Bailey bridges, seeds and machinery, without which these countries cannot produce for themselves. None of these things will be provided in sufficient quantities or sufficiently quickly if decisions are left to the generals, whose minds must necessarily be mainly concentrated upon operations. It is a case in which the heads of governments must give a new directive. The body that has to save and rehabilitate Europe can no longer be the Cinderella of the Services. Food has become a No. 1 priority if Europe is to be saved from total shipwreck.

The Two Last Rivers

East and West the Allies have virtually completed this week operations essential as a preliminary to forcing on each front the Reich's last river barriers. Lunging northwards, after reinforcing his right wing, Marshal Zhukov has completed the disintegration (begun by Marshal Rokossovsky's thrust to Köslin) of the German forces in Pomerania: Stettin and the lower reaches of the Oder are now under Russian gunfire. After a (probable) pause for regrouping, the Oder will be forced, if it is not turned from the South by Marshal Koniev, and the final advance into Brandenburg and Saxony will begin. In the West the Allies are now up against the Rhine from Bonn to the Dutch frontier. Since von Rundstedt succeeded in withdrawing skilfully his battered 15th and 1st Paratroop armies (albeit with heavy losses in men and equipment), the Allies must expect to meet with serious opposition when Rhine crossings are attempted; but General Patton's offensive in the Eiffel is effectively disrupting the German 7th Army; the Rhine front should soon run as far south as

Coblenz. Inside the shrinking area of the Reich, oil plants, rail centres, industrial areas and the dwindling number of usable Baltic ports are being subjected to such bombardment from the air that disorganisation (accentuated by a growing mass of homeless refugees) is bound from now on to affect the military effort. And, from the standpoint of the German High Command, the task of manning the vital stretches of Rhine and Oder is rendered more difficult by the extraordinary dispersal of the German Army at this late stage in the war. Not far short of 100 divisions are now isolated from the main battle fronts—in Courland, East Prussia and Danzig, Norway, Italy and Yugoslavia. The counter-offensive in Hungary is militarily inexplicable except on the assumption that Northern Germany is ultimately to be abandoned.

Commonwealth and World Authority

The trend of discussions at the Chatham House Conference on British Commonwealth relations suggests that France (if she assumes leadership of the lesser Powers) may receive support from the Dominions in urging amendments to the proposed composition of the World Council. Various modifications were considered, of which the most promising was that regional groups rather than individual small nations should furnish the non-permanent Council members. Delegates seem to have been unanimous in hoping that Britain would take the lead in promoting an Economic Authority to co-ordinate the reconstruction of Europe on lines transcending national frontiers. As for the Commonwealth's internal policy, there was an encouraging tendency to turn away from the restrictive, closed fiscal conceptions of the Ottawa Agreement towards a more expansive economy, subject to the continuance of international wartime controls over raw materials. The internationalisation of Colonial administration was regarded as at present impracticable, but the Conference showed awareness of the need to deal with racial discrimination—e.g., against Indians in Kenya and South Africa—and there was a consensus of opinion in favour of advisory regional councils to assist in the development of contiguous colonies. No voice was seemingly raised against the proposition that, without immediate Dominion status, India cannot fit into or play her rightful part in the Commonwealth structure.

Obstruction in France

Except in reactionary circles, General de Gaulle's eagerly awaited speech on French reconstruction has met with a cold reception. And rightly so. Obsessed with his notion that France must rely only on her own armed strength to secure her "rights," the General did little to satisfy either the Socialists or the Communists, who have temporarily joined forces in issuing a manifesto calling for acceleration of social reforms. The speech contained passages emphasising the need for State direction of credit, means of communication and transport, and "the source of energy." But little or nothing was promised in the way of positive measures. All that de Gaulle seems to have immediately in mind is a National Economic Council in which employers, employed and all concerned can co-operate, and whose functions in part will be to inculcate "respect for the directing authorities in industry." With France in a desperate economic plight, and with Big Business collaborators and Vichyist bureaucrats still firmly entrenched, these words have an ugly ring. Having found in the Franco-Russian Pact a weapon admirably designed for splitting the Left, de Gaulle, we suspect, is counting on the physical weariness of the French people to enable him to pursue a negative domestic policy.

Housing—Latest Version

Mr. Willink's version of the Government's revised housing programme differs somewhat from that put forward recently by Mr. Sandys; but, though it may be clearer, it is hardly more satisfactory. According to the Minister of Health. there are still to be upwards of 100,000 temporary bungalows of one sort or another; but there is no indication that the supply of permanent dwellings will be increased, as Mr. Sandys suggested it would, to offset the reduction in the number of temporary bungalows. The official target is still only 300,000 permanent houses built or *building* within two years of the defeat of Germany—which would be 60,000 fewer than were being built *annually* before the war, even if all the 300,000 were finished and not merely started during the two years. Housing sites have been acquired, not prepared, for only 240,000 houses, and detailed plans prepared for only 90,000 Mr. Willink talked as if practically nothing has yet been done in the way of actual preparation of sites.

The Miners' Answer

The miners have now issued their reply to Mr. Foot's proposals. The Foot plan, they say, "would not solve the crisis within the industry, but would lead to an intensification of it, a greater restriction of output, and the protection of vested interests at the expense of the miners and the general public." They agree fully with Mr. Foot that the industry stands in need of far-reaching technical reorganisation; indeed, they go beyond him in this respect. But they argue that a re-capitalisation estimated as likely to cost anything from £100 millions to £300 millions cannot possibly be carried through except by public money and under public responsibility; and they make a clear call for public ownership, for which they are working out a detailed scheme in conjunction with the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress. They stress the impossibility of getting higher production or of attracting a sufficient flow of new recruits needed for coal-mining except under unified ownership. This is well stated, and more than enough to dispose of Mr. Foot's egregious plan to reward the owners for their past services by giving them a statutory monopoly to exploit the public.

The Catering Trades and the Public

The tentative proposal of a National Catering Corporation, put forward by the Catering Wages Commission in its report on the future of the catering industry, is not fully enough worked out to make comment easy. It is difficult to see how such a body could work acceptably to the immensely different sections of which the industry is made up, at any rate if it were constituted on a representative basis. What is there in common between the Ritz and a fried-fish shop, or between Gleneagles and a village pub? Except on the wages side the problem has to be broken up before it can be properly tackled. There is an admitted need to do all we can after the war to improve cooking and standards of hotel amenity. There is an immense problem to be faced in providing cheap accommodation for millions of holiday makers who will be getting paid holidays for the first time in their lives. There is a third problem of providing for the continuance of the services rendered during the war by the British Restaurants, factory canteens, and other quick and cheap meals services. But can one corporation be asked to look after all these things, which are likely in practice to lead to very sharp conflicts of opinion in which the interests of the traders coincide with those of the public?

The Teachers' Grievances

The question of teachers' salaries is still being hotly debated. There is still, we think, much too much talk about the grievances of graduates. The people who in our view have a grievance are not graduates as such, but those who, whether they are graduates or not, occupy posts of responsibility or show high skill. There is nothing particularly grand about a pass or a low honours degree; and the holder of such a degree may be in fact inferior to many who have got their education at a Training College and have not subsequently sat for a University examination. On the other hand, we agree cordially both that allowances for graduates should not be merged with other special payments and that the provision for special payments for responsible posts is much too small. We agree, too, that many head-masters and head-mistresses have a grievance in that the scales proposed are too low in relation to pre-war scales. What we urge is that, in devising remedies for these real grievances, we must not undermine the principle of equality of payment in different types of schools.

Justice

English Justice, on the whole, is good, but there is not enough of it. This is the keynote of the report on the Administration of Justice recently issued by the Conservative Central Committee on Post-War Problems, a fairly progressive document called (with some justification) "Looking Ahead." The Committee recognise the danger that "pride in our legal institutions may degenerate into uncritical complacency," and they make sound proposals about extending the Poor Persons' facilities to the County Courts, retiring all magistrates at 72, issuing a "public" direction to the Committees who recommend J.P.s that their recommendations should disregard political services, abolishing the part-time Justices' Clerk and putting legally qualified and paid chairmen on the Petty Sessional Benches. Complacency creeps in where the Report deals with the cost of appeals, which "cannot be cheapened," and also where it commends the system which relies on the Poor Man's Lawyer Centres, supported by charity and hard-working volunteers, to assist the poor in obtaining or defending their legal rights. There is an interesting suggestion that the Home Secretary should stop sending "circulars" to the Magistrates, and should either let them read what he has to say in the press or get the Lord Chief Justice to approve the circulars before issue.

PARLIAMENT: High Argument

Wednesday, noon

MEMBERS generally agree that the Crimea Debate was outstanding among the great debates of this war, not only in the importance of its content but in the eloquence of speakers on both sides; moreover, it was a real debate—not a series of variations on a woolly encomium. It reached its highest level on the second day, when the Tory anti-Soviet amendment was debated. On the third day, inevitably, there was a sense of anti climax: the standard of speaking fell off (perhaps it would be unfair if the Chair called only first-raters in a big debate); Eden's further reply was tired and ragged; and the further division (413-0) seemed artificial and unnecessary.

The Government, however, was exceedingly and naturally anxious to have it. It was almost a "blanket" endorsement of the Crimea decisions. Many Labour men would rather not have voted; but the I.L.P. obligingly forced the division. (As the Prime Minister said, beaming triumphantly, "If there hadn't been an I.L.P., we should have had to invent one.") The "Members for Poland" abstained from voting; so did several Labour Members, including Aneurin Bevan (who had voted for the Government in the previous day's division), and Common Wealth.

Four of the most able back-bench speeches in the debate were those of W. J. Brown, who said, as one accustomed to Trade Union bargaining, that Yalta was "the maximum that could be expected"; Harold Nicolson, who, despite an affection of the throat, held the House with his first-hand account of the origin of the Curzon Line—a substantial point being that, at the time it was drawn up, in 1919, any possible bias would have been anti-Russian—and with his eloquent debunking of "holy, holy Poland"; Peter Thorneycroft, who seemed to think that compliance with Russian wishes now might help to coax Russia into the war against Japan; and Victor Raikes, who said that the Atlantic Charter had started as a principle and then become a "guide," and was now on its way to becoming a mere "gesture."

Eden made neat play with Raikes's new-found idealism by quoting from an old speech in which he had attacked idealists. Raikes interrupted to say: "Perhaps I have learned a little idealism while my right honourable friend has lost a bit."

Shinwell was the only front-bench Labour spokesman who firmly equated the Tory dissidents' concern for small nations with hatred of Soviet Russia, and smelt out the Anglo-German Fellowship and Friends of Franco aroma that overhung their little *putsch*.

Socialists should not overlook Friday's important debate on the working of the new financial corporations announced recently by the Chancellor. Pethick-Lawrence (unwontedly) created a light diversion by referring to the manufacture of wooden raspberry-pips for jam: would such an industry qualify for a loan under the new arrangements? Sir George Schuster took a high view of the conscientiousness and public spirit of company directors. Aneurin Bevan roundly denounced the handing-over of public investment to the banks, their nominees, and others responsible for industrial disaster in the past. Benson, however, thought that there was "too much fuss" about these corporations: finance—"mere pen-and-ink entries in ledgers"—was less important than a real general plan of controlled industrial development, with proper facilities and priorities. Anderson made a bland but not entirely reassuring reply, regretting the "disagreeable flavour" of some of the rude words used by Bevan.

London taxi-drivers are *not* allowed, said Herbert Morrison, to demand a contribution from each of the passengers, when cabs are shared: drivers who think they are should be referred to Hansard, Vol. 408, No. 42, Col. 1682. It is hoped that this will silence them.

PONTIFEX MINOR

SAN FRANCISCO AND THE FUTURE

BARELY seven weeks before the San Francisco Conference, the Big Three have completed the preparatory work they began last September at Dumbarton Oaks. Even so they have failed to secure the assent of the French Government. General de Gaulle has refused to join with the Big Three and China in issuing invitations to the Conference, partly out of pique that he was not invited to Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta, but partly for more solid reasons.

France received the assurance that, even if she became co-sponsor of the Conference, she would be left free to move amendments to the Crimean voting compromise and to the proposal to make action on regional agreements depend on authorisation by the Security Council. M. Bidault is said to have been satisfied by these and other assurances, but General de Gaulle objected because he could not persuade the Big Three to describe the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and the Crimean voting compromise as a "basis of discussion" at San Francisco and not as the basis of a new "Charter."

It has in fact taken many months for the Big Three to reach the measure of their present agreement and it would be unreasonable to expect the San Francisco Conference to arrive at final decisions on the text of the Charter of the United Nations—except, of course, on the assumption that the forty-five States there assembled are expected merely to express their gratitude for what the Big Three have done for them. Moreover, the more democratic nations may well feel that they cannot be expected to commit themselves on such an issue with so little time for discussion among their own people. The Governments of the liberated European countries are all provisional and self-constituted, and have as yet no mandate from their publics. The Government of Britain is based on an ageing Parliament and a swollen Tory majority elected ten years ago on an issue (upholding the covenant against Mussolini!) which has no more than an ironical relevance to the problems of to-day. On the eve of an election this Government has no authority to speak for the British people on such an issue as the structure of the foundations of peace. In the nature of things San Francisco cannot be more than a dress rehearsal.

If the San Francisco Conference adopts and publishes a Draft Charter, it will have done all that can reasonably be expected and as much as it ought to attempt. The Draft Charter should be turned into a treaty open for signature and ratification only after a general election in this country, and when the liberated European countries, especially France, are ruled by governments elected by their peoples.

The voting compromise still further underlines the predominance of the Great Powers, already excessive in the eyes of some of the small States, in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. The Council consists of five Powers (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Great Britain, France, and China) as permanent members, and six other States elected by the Assembly as temporary members. On matters of procedure the Council requires seven votes—i.e., one permanent member must assent. All decisions of substance require unanimity of the permanent members, but only two out of the six temporary members—i.e., the formers' votes are all-important, whereas the latters' do not matter. When the Council considers whether the existence of a dispute may endanger peace, or what measures to recommend to the parties for settling their dispute, including the reference of it to a regional organisation, its decisions again require seven votes, including the five permanent members; but the parties do not vote. On the other hand, the Council cannot decide to act in order to put an end to a threat to or breach of the peace except by a vote including all the five permanent members, whether or not any or all of them are parties to the dispute, plus two of the six temporary members. The only advance achieved by this formula is that a Great Power cannot prevent a dispute in which it is interested being discussed by the Council. It can still prevent any action being taken to stop the dispute being settled by war.

This means that on the Council the Great Powers are everything and the smaller States next to nothing. This position is underlined by the fact that there is no provision for enlarging the membership of the Council: the temporary members are elected for two years only, and are not immediately re-eligible. It also means that if a Permanent Member of the Council commits aggression, the Council cannot decide that it should be coerced. In this sense the Great Powers are above the law.

This no doubt is "realism" in the sense that the Governments of the Great Powers refuse to submit themselves to the law and will go to war, if they want to, whatever rules are laid down. But it does raise the question why anyone talks of "a League with teeth in it." It is suggested that if the Security Council, run by the Great Powers, has at its disposal military contingents from these Powers, it will at least stop wars among the smaller Powers. There is unhappily little substance in this contention. No small Power which contemplates aggression against a neighbour will resort to arms without the backing of a Great Power, and if it obtains that backing it will be perfectly safe, as far as the Security Council goes, to make war. Sir Arthur Salter correctly said in the House of Commons last week that if we avoid war it will not be because of the machinery of this Council.

If any welcome is to be given to this projected organisation it can only be because, in a completely anarchic world, it is good that the most powerful anarchists should desire to work together. We must look for other practical tests of this desire. The tests are their joint ability to reconstruct two shattered Continents and their readiness to reach agreement on such issues as the distribution of raw materials, on oil, strategic bases and the future of civil aviation. On these issues the Governments of the Big Three have as yet shown no disposition to sink their exclusive nationalisms. Dumbarton Oaks proposed an Economic and Social Council. The issues with which such a Council would deal will underlie all the discussions at San Francisco.

KINGS, OIL AND WATER

AN event happened in Cairo last week which may have a considerable influence on the tangled politics of the Middle East. The Foreign Ministers of all the Arab States met and signed the constitution of a permanent league that unites them all. It is not a federation, but (though its text is not yet published) it is, presumably, at least a close alliance which binds them to a common foreign policy. This is of importance, since Russia, the United States and France are all interested in this part of the world, no less than the British Empire. If our road to India runs through it, the others share our interest in its oil, while France has with Syria and the Lebanon cultural ties fortified by a long and cherished tradition. The new phase will also affect the future of Palestine and the Jewish question, and it is significant that a Palestinian Arab adhered to the League's charter on behalf of his fellow Muslims. The world will inevitably see in this event a success for British policy which has worked for this result for many years. Three of the signatory States, Egypt, Irak and Saudi Arabia, have long been linked in various ways and degrees to the British Empire.

It will be claimed for the new League that it establishes the independence of these States, which will be stronger as a single block than they were as rival units. If the feuds and jealousies that divided their dynasties are really at an end, this is in a measure true. But neither singly nor as a group have they on a realistic reckoning the resources that give a meaning to that misleading word "independence." The most advanced of them has taken only the first rudimentary steps in industrial development: none of them has or can create a heavy industry: none of them could make a tank or an airplane. Rightly or wrongly, then, the world will see in this Arab League an outwork of the British Empire, and we must not expect the French, who still insist on their position of "special privilege" in Syria, to view its formation with much enthusiasm. The attitude of the Russians and Americans will be influenced by their anxiety about oil, of which Saudi Arabia is now believed to be an even richer source than Irak.

How this new League will affect the Jewish National Home cannot be clearly foreseen, but the association with it of the Palestinian Arabs justifies some anxiety. This difficult and passionately disputed question will have to be faced in the very near future. The worst approach to it lies through the jungle of Mid-Eastern politics. There is, however, another way of approaching it. These Arab States are at present a group of backward political units, ruled by a reactionary and rather rapacious feudal caste. Their populations are dismally poor and they are in numbers, wealth and civilisation far behind the levels they reached in antiquity. Why this is so is no mystery. Norman conquerors destroyed their elaborate systems of irrigation, and after their irruption followed centuries of stagnation and misgovernment under the Turks. To stereotype this decay in a rigid political pattern is the worst thing we could do. Nor can we find a solution of the Middle East problem by concentrating on our own Imperialist interest in oil-wells, ports and airfields vital for our communications.

There falls to be considered the possibility of restoring for the benefit of these neglected peoples the civilisation that once flourished in these semi-deserts. The archæologists have taught us to respect the great achievements of the ancients. But modern engineering leaves them far behind. It can do much more with water for purposes of irrigation, and, in addition, it can use it to generate electricity. Leagues between kings may be a good thing in their way, but what we ardently desire to see is a plan of development for the whole of this Arab world, based on the utilisation of rivers and sub-soil water. Persia comes into the picture at one end and North Africa at the other. The New Deal has worked out an inspiring model in the Tennessee Valley and tested there and elsewhere the techniques by which soil erosion can be combated. The "Big Three," it is said, are about to inaugurate a new form of "trusteeship," under which they propose to act as the guardians of some backward and troubled regions. To summon these States as independent sovereigns to San Francisco is an empty gesture. To offer them help in developing their resources of water would be the first act of an enlightened trustee.

As one item in a broad policy of this kind the Zionist question can be solved: take it in isolation and we shall fail. It is fatal that the Arabs should get the idea that development and the boons of science are only for the Jews. That has been from the start the chief misfortune of our policy in Palestine. The development of the country should have been planned as a whole in order to give its Arab inhabitants confidence in their future. Even now it is not too late to face the problem in this spirit. Nazi brutality has made it more than ever incumbent on us to provide a fair opportunity for the surviving Jews. Palestine should be open to all Jews who desire to emigrate there and whom the country can absorb. But to neglect the needs of the Arab population in it and round it, while we do this, would be as unjust as it would be impolitic. The key to the future, here as elsewhere in the Middle East, is irrigation.

Engineers have worked out for the Jordan Valley a plan inspired by the Tennessee Valley which promises prosperity to the Arabs, while it would bring within the bounds of possibility a Jewish immigration that might approach a maximum of five millions. There is not room on the land, needless to say, for so many, but cheap power would bring the chance for a big industrial development. If, however, all the benefits of this scheme are to be realised, it must not be confined to Palestine, and still less must it be limited to the fraction of a partitioned Palestine which some students of this question would offer to the Jews. Beyond the Jordan Valley lies the Emir Abdullah's principality, Transjordania, a poor and stagnant region, most of it a desert, in which the superb ruins of ancient cities testify to its former glories. With water from the Valley, its present population, all of it Arab, could promptly be multiplied five times over. The same thing is true of the desolate southern country of Judea, known as the Negeb. A few Bedouin roam over it to-day and grow at best a catch crop of barley round the broken pillars of its buried temples. Here on a sober reckoning, given water and electric power, a million immigrants could be settled.

These are not the fantastic estimates of a partisan. We draw them from a book that deserves to be widely read, *Palestine, Land of Promise* (Gollancz, 4s. 6d.). The author, W. C. Lowdermilk, who is not a Jew, is the Assistant-Chief of the Soil Conservation Service of the United States. Few experts can know as much from practice as well as theory about the miracles of modern engineering in dealing with deserts and rivers. Throughout he bases his hopeful conclusions on experience gained in the Tennessee Valley and in the very similar climate of California. His estimates are sufficiently detailed to be convincing, and he is able to summon to his support numerous expert witnesses. His book is sponsored by Sir John Russell, of Rothamsted, than whom there is in this country no higher authority on the science of farming. Jewish colonists, as we all know, have performed miracles in drawing fertility from sand dunes and swamps. But, so far, they have used only the water each settlement could raise from its own wells. This proposal for a Jordan Valley Authority is something new, which taps unused resources, offers electricity as well as water, and promises to do as much for the Arabs as for the Jews. Is Downing Street familiar with this plan? Is it understood that the rash drawing of boundaries might destroy half its value? Our own inclination is to discourage haste in drafting a political solution. The Middle East is a thirsty land. What it wants is neither kings nor constitutions but water.

THE NEXT STEP IN INDIA

[From an Indian Correspondent]

The Indian deadlock has now continued for two years and a half. Neither the Government of India nor the major parties seem inclined to take the initiative either in reopening discussions or in discovering new methods of approach to the problem. And yet a way has to be found. The British Government are committed to the policy of granting India the fullest measure of freedom as soon after the war as possible.

From the public utterances of responsible British authorities it would seem that the official point of view is that, since the Cripps offer is still open, it is for the Indian parties to agree and place before the British Government a settlement to which they will give effect according to their declared policy.

Now that the Burma campaign is making marked progress and the war in the East receding from the frontiers of India, the time would seem to be ripe for taking up the discussions again. Britain's honour is pledged to a settlement with India, and, apart from her responsibility for the Government of that country, she is committed to taking every possible step to make India a free member of the British Commonwealth.

The first step required in this connection is to bring the Indian question again on the plane of normal political discussions. What stands in the way of such discussions being initiated is the fact that the leading members of the Congress Executive are still in jail and the working committee itself is an illegal body. It may be asked: what guarantee is there if the Congress leaders are set free they will not again start on a plan of civil disobedience? The answer is simple. The Author and Chief Architect of Civil Disobedience has long been free and has stated clearly enough that it is not his intention to launch such a campaign in the present circumstances. With the Japanese threat to Indian security fading into the background, hardly any justification can now be found for keeping men like Abul Kalam Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru in jail.

It may be that if negotiations are thus reopened with the national leaders they will fail again, either through lack of agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League or on the arrangements for the interim period. In such a case, what is the course open to Britain? A very interesting suggestion has been made by Sir Mahommed Zafrulla Khan, one of the most outstanding men in India, gifted alike with an appreciation of political realities and an understanding of administrative requirements. His suggestion is that the British Government should formally declare that, unless an agreement is reached between the major political parties within one year after the cessation of hostilities with Japan, the British Government will promulgate a temporary constitution defining the rights of the different elements in the country and transfer to it all its powers. This constitution will be subject to three essential provisos:

(a) that the structure of rights created by the transitory constitution will be changed only by agreement between the parties;

(b) the provisions of the constitution will be changed only in accordance with the special procedure laid down therein;

(c) a treaty will be negotiated with Britain by the Government which comes into power as a result of the elections which will follow within a specified time after the promulgation of the transitory constitution.

The Zafrulla proposals have the advantage of throwing on the Indian political parties the responsibility of coming to an agreed decision within a specified time. If no decision is reached there will be a procedure laid down for modifying the transitory constitution when such an agreement is reached.

The general elections that will follow the transfer of authority will bring into power a coalition of the Congress and the League. It will be open to the Government which then takes power to negotiate the treaty with the British Government in England. Till such a treaty is negotiated and ratified, Great Britain will maintain her authority through the Governor-General in a manner which will be specifically provided in the instrument of transfer.

If such a programme is to be effective, certain preliminary steps will have to be taken early which will not only re-establish confidence but convince the Indian public that Britain intends seriously to transfer power to India. In the first place, all non-Indian recruitment to the Services except on a temporary basis should immediately be given up. Secondly, the department of external affairs should be placed under an Indian member and a serious effort should be made to Indianise the diplomatic service which looks after India's relations with neighbouring countries. Thirdly, popular governments must be restored in the provinces. For over five years now the Governors have been carrying on the administration of the provinces on their own responsibility. Apart from the constitutional impropriety of such a course, this prolonged period of irresponsible government has put the clock back in most provinces. Especially in Madras, Bombay and the United Provinces not even the pretence has been kept up of administering the province in consultation with the people's representatives.

If a programme embracing broadly the lines indicated above is given effect to, then there is a reasonable chance of the proposal put forward by Sir Zafrulla Khan meeting with success. In any case it would be obvious that the release of the Congress Leaders and the return to Parliamentary Government in the provinces where the Governors now rule are the immediate steps to be taken if the Indian problem is again to be brought on to the plane of discussion and negotiation.

A LONDON DIARY

Sympathy with the Poles and efforts to remedy their grievances is one thing; a mass Anglo-Polish Catholic society presided over by the Archbishop of Westminster, with the direct political aim of stirring up trouble with the Soviet Union, is quite another. The Archbishop himself, of course, was careful to ask the Poles to forgive their enemies and to remind them that Russia, like other sinners, might still be redeemed. Will he consider that redemption is accomplished if Russia allows Poland to be a strong State (likely to be greatly strengthened, as Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden pointed out, by the frontier changes), and insists on a democratic form of government within her borders? I doubt it, for the Poles and British, who demonstrated at the mass meeting on Monday, were not interested in democracy. The meeting was in the main an anti-Soviet demonstration, backed by the official Catholic hierarchy, which sees in the Polish question a good excuse for pressing its anti-socialist and anti-rational propaganda. It is a dangerous departure. England is still strongly Protestant, and liable to be aroused by the threat of priests in politics. We have been very tolerant to Catholicism during the last century (the last big anti-Popery cry was a hundred years ago) and in a democracy we all of us concede the right of Roman Catholics, like any other pressure group, to do the best they can for themselves in education and other internal affairs. The Vatican is of course fighting for power against Communism everywhere. In the Ukraine its enemy is the Orthodox Church. Some day Stalin and the Pope will surely have to reach a Concordat. But in the meantime are we to have a Catholic political agitation organised by the hierarchy, to destroy the United Nations?

* * *

The impression that Russia made on the British Parliamentary Delegation which has just come back from a tour that took them to the Central

Asiatic Republics, and indeed through a large part of the Soviet Union, appears to be that Russians are overwhelmingly interested in the development inside their country, full of energy and idealism about building a new civilisation, and above all anxious to avoid any kind of clash with the outside world. Not a hint of "doctrinal chauvinism." Intense patriotism exists, not only in the U.S.S.R. as a whole, but in each of the constituent Republics. A new life of immense possibility is opening up for millions who only a few years ago were illiterate, primitive tribesmen. To the Russian citizen all this bargaining for position in Poland and other neighbouring European States is just the necessary game which Stalin has to play to prevent Germany or a combination of Western Powers again threatening the new life which they see that they are able to create within their own vast and still largely undeveloped territory.

* * *

One point made by Polish spokesmen in the House of Commons last week needs clearing up. This is the question of the secret protocol to the Anglo-Polish Treaty of 1939. Mr. Eden admitted its existence, but said that its effect was not to extend our obligation to Poland, as seemed on the surface to be the case, but to limit it. A more difficult question concerns the deportations of Poles to the U.S.S.R. Apart from "security" deportations since the Red Army drove the Germans from Poland, the Poles say that in 1939-40 as many as 1,230,000 Poles were taken from their homes, and that, while many left Russia with General Anders, about a quarter of a million have "disappeared." Such allegations have naturally affected the minds of many who would otherwise be whole-heartedly on the Soviet side in this issue.

* * *

As political tacticians the Young Tories are no fools. I had long suspected that the *Economist* would find support in the wrong quarters for its argument that, after the war, capital investment in re-equipping industry must be a No. 1 priority, even at the expense of curtailment or postponement of re-housing plans. And now here it is. In *Tools for the Next Job*, the Tory Reform Committee calls with gusto for £8,000 millions to be sunk in new instruments of production during the first six or eight years of peace. Investment on such a scale in this direction would involve, of course, extreme abstinence in consumption of food, clothing and so forth, unless we decided to shut down on housing and other forms of "social equipment" such as parks, schools, civic centres and the like. If we were emerging from revolution, as Russia did in 1918, with the compelling vision before us of a new republic to be built, it might be possible to get the British public to accept the necessary self-sacrifices. As it is, with peace bound to revive all the appetites, jealousies and frictions of capitalism, the idea that working-class families can be expected for eight years to endure very short commons while factories are being enlarged and re-equipped for the ultimate benefit of shareholders, is nonsense. And the Young Tories, I have little doubt, know it. Their scheme—and it is quite ingenious—is simply designed to suggest that we can't have *both* houses *and* the tools needed for full employment; so, if we insist on both and get neither, it will not be the Tories' fault.

* * *

E.A.M. seems to be making a very real effort to carry out its side of the agreement with General Plastiras. The arms that it was pledged to hand over are now stored awaiting collection. In the meantime, until the British and Greek troops are able to take over the whole country, E.A.M. police and civil authorities are maintaining order without complaints from anyone except the Right extremists in Athens. I wish one could say the same about the Plastiras regime. Even if the assaults on demobilised members of E.L.A.S. are dismissed as the work of irresponsible reactionaries who see their chance to terrorise or liquidate E.A.M. supporters, the evidence accumulates that in Athens and other towns there is a deliberate campaign to penalise opponents of Plastiras. I see that a number of professors—amongst them Angellopoulos and Svolos—and some of the high members of the clergy who fought with E.A.M. have been summarily dismissed. Many hundreds of civil servants, professional and manual workers have also lost their jobs. This method of restoring "order" can only sow the seeds of further trouble. Even Plastiras' Cabinet seems to have some difficulty in swallowing his proposals for prohibiting meetings and propaganda which lack official sanction. Moscow radio—which has broken its long silence on the Greek affair—has now come out with a series of charges against Plastiras for victimisation of E.A.M. members.

* * *

Unsavoury as some things are inside Greece, the most disquieting news at the moment is the encouragement Plastiras appears to be giving to the Greek chauvinists' claims on Albania and Macedonia. Papandreou himself gave some support to the demand for the annexation of Northern Epirus from Albania; but I do not think he ever went so far as Plastiras, who has just assured the ex-Bishop of Argyrocastro—the President of the Greek Northern Epirus Committee—that this question will be solved in the very near future. It would be foolish and despicable for an inflated Greek nationalism to seize this territory, which is indisputably Albanian. Broadcasts from Tirana radio show that the Albanian Government takes this threat seriously. At present it is asking for recognition by the Allies—to which it has an unchallenged right. If it is argued that Albania is too small a country to be genuinely independent in our jungle world, the only sensible solution is a Balkan federation, including Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece—which might have come to pass, if the British had not backed the Greek nationalists.

* * *

"I can get some lime from the Gardening Association," I said hopefully. "No good—too late," said Mr. Park. "The autumn's the time for lime." "Bone meal?" I enquired modestly. "Yes," said Mr. Park, "that won't do any harm at all." Greatly encouraged, I ventured to mention fertiliser. If I had put the garden fork into Mr. Park the effect could not have been more startling. "That stuff!" he said, "if you bring it in the garden I'll throw it out. Poisoning the earth, that's all it is." "But," I said, "if I can't get any other manure, Mr. Park, wouldn't it be better than nothing? After all, it's my garden, if I do want to try some." "Very well," said Mr. Park, "then you can look after your garden yourself." I thought it tactful to switch the conversation and to get other opinions of the Ministry's fertiliser in the pub. At first everyone was silent; then somebody said, "I'd rather have what my hens leave behind." "Yes," I said, "so would I. Will you let me have some?" This seemed to everyone a good joke. There was universal agreement that it had to be animal manure, with fertiliser scarcely, if at all, in the running. However, I got a bag of it and hid it where I hope Mr. Park won't find it. I plan some fine night surreptitiously to dig in a little in some part of the garden and find out whether fertilised cabbages do better than the others. But I doubt if I shall have the courage, for Mr. Park would almost certainly find out.

* * *

A correspondent sends an advertisement from a firm in the North, which desires to pay a compliment to the Prime Minister. Under the heading "Churchill 1945" are the following words:

He above the rest,
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower;

These lines come from *Paradise Lost* (Book I, line 589 ff.) and are part of Milton's famous description of Satan.

CRITIC

INSIDE THE ASYLUM

[*For obvious reasons, the author of this article must be anonymous. We accept his* bona fides *and believe him to be a reliable observer. We do not know how far the picture he presents is typical.*]

A FEW months ago I had a nervous breakdown, and my doctor suggested that I could more quickly recuperate in a mental home. He was very emphatic on the point that "mental homes are very different from what they used to be." With that assurance, I arrived at the hospital, accompanied by my wife. After we had passed through a number of doors, each one carefully and noisily locked by the accompanying attendant, we were inside, and I found myself in a small room with three large men in warder's uniform. "Strip," said the biggest. The three men then went carefully through my pockets, noted and removed the contents, returned them and my clothes to my wife, bathed me and handed me a coarse and none too clean night shirt. I had not been aware that it was customary to put all patients to bed, but I had no objection to this procedure. It was then about two o'clock, and I had had a long journey to the hospital.

Food was not provided until six o'clock, when I had a repast consisting of a slice of bread and margarine, and a cup of nauseatingly sweet tea. For three weeks I remained in bed, deprived of the things I needed most, namely, good food, sleep and mental occupation. I soon made the interesting discovery that most of the men in the ward were certified patients, not voluntary patients like myself. The man on my right was recovering from injuries received in trying to throw himself off a roof. The man on my left was on a "violent" observation card. I soon exhausted their conversational abilities. Sleep was out of the question. The two male nurses engaged in incessant conversation, and I judged that it would not pay to protest. One night I was awakened from a brief doze by piercing screams, and I found that one of my neighbours was receiving "treatment" from a twenty-stone attendant kneeling on his chest. "Give him some more, Ernie," was his mate's advice. Such treatment could easily be reported. Of course. The result is simply that the patient concerned is credited with delusions, or a persecution mania.

For three weeks I had no occupation, except to watch other patients, some of them obvious melancholics, pacing in the tiny exercise yard in front of my windows for nine or ten hours a day. For all classes of patients, it seemed to be considered that confinement and discipline were their only requirements.

During these three weeks I had no medical treatment or advice, apart from a formal physical examination a day or two after my arrival. Later I found that in the hospital, with its thirteen hundred patients, there were only two doctors, one of them, the superintendent, being engaged in purely clerical and administrative duties. These two psychiatrists were brave, conscientious men trying to do their best in impossible conditions. They were handicapped by the dumb opposition of a staff who regarded us all as lunatics, and determined to treat us accordingly. No patient was ever bullied in the presence of a doctor.

Although two-thirds of the thirteen hundred patients were women, the governors did not seem to have heard of women psychiatrists.

At the end of the three weeks, the head male nurse flung a bundle of clothes on my bed, and said, "What the bloody hell are you—an invalid for life?" This was his way of intimating that I was to be allowed to get up.

After getting up, patients had a choice of two occupations. They could walk round the yard, or they could stop in the tiny common room. In the yard, there was a choice of directions. We were able to walk either in a clockwise direction, or in an anti-clockwise direction. In the common room, one could not help but notice the lack of segregation. Sexual perverts, persecution maniacs, imbeciles and melancholics mingled together indiscriminately. My fellow patients included a former chief shoeing smith to a European king (stable, 600), a former county chief constable, a man who in my childhood had been famous as a boxer, and another who was known throughout Europe as the leading tenor in a great opera company. Some of the patients had been in the hospital forty or fifty years.

The doctors were obviously compelled to concentrate on short term patients. I was fortunate enough to get satisfactory and efficacious medical treatment, but there were patients whose cases might have yielded to intensive treatment who were seldom or never seen by the doctor. The most surprising thing of all was that there was no attempt to entertain, employ, educate, instruct or amuse the patients. A few inmates did one or two hours' menial work each morning.

At meal times, the head attendant used to bawl, "Stand for grace," and mumble something about "thanking God," although it seemed to most of us that some lower authority than the Deity was responsible for the quality of the food. At bath time, thirty nude men were herded into the bathroom together, and several had to wash in the same water. This meant that those of us who were reasonably clean in our habits acquired a fresh layer of dirt each bath day.

One afternoon we were told that a visit from the Nonconformist chaplain was impending, and that those of us who on entering had allowed ourselves to be described as Nonconformists were to meet him. I looked forward to the opportunity of a quiet chat with a man who would be neither an attendant nor an inmate. I was unduly optimistic. Half an hour before the "visit," the Nonconformists were sorted out, and made to sit on a form in alphabetical order. When the chaplain came, the head attendant shouted out our names, and the chaplain made a few appropriate remarks to each of us in passing. This touching ceremony did not greatly edify those of us who were participating in it, but it was a source of great gratification to those who were only spectators.

The work of the individual doctors cannot be too highly praised. The system and routine of the hospital cannot be too strongly condemned. It is to be hoped that in post-war planning, the most helpless class of all will not be forgotten.

A. B. C.

MY FABIAN MEMORIES

When one is seventy-three years old, one's memory for old-time events becomes clearer and more vivid; and I can now visualise the daily scenes and re-hear the daily sounds of life in the little Somersetshire village of Bishop's Lydeard, where I was born and where I spent my early youth, more clearly than the events of last year. I have elsewhere described this life in detail, so that here I will only mention that from a very early age, long before my teens, I was an intellectual rebel—mainly against church-going and humbug and the claims of orthodox religion. By the time I was twelve I was definitely an agnostic in religion and an inquiring Socialist in politics. At boarding-school I ceased to bother about these things for a while, building up a love of books and elementary learning of all kinds, and becoming a collector of objects of natural history—fossils, birds' eggs, and so on. At sixteen I matriculated and went to London as a medical student at St. Mary's Hospital, living in lodgings in Kilburn, my total income for all purposes being at that time thirty shillings a week.

I disliked everything about my medical work, doubting if the patients were much better for the treatment given them, so my interests went off to Socialism and agnosticism once more. I went to the South Place Ethical Society's meetings; I attended Socialist lectures wherever I could find them—S.D.F. meetings in underground basements in the Marylebone Road, lectures by William Morris at Kelmscott House for the Socialist League. I joined both these latter organisations in turn; and then came across the Fabians; who seemed to me, though rather mild and patient, to be thorough and convincing. That must have been in the late '80s.

The Fabians impressed me in many ways. They were obviously educated and cultivated people, who yet lived very simple lives and were friendly to everyone without distinction of class. The style of furniture they affected in their homes, even the kind of dress they wore, appealed to me. These were the days of Pre-Raphaelitism, of solid oak tables, of self-coloured pottery. There was nothing formal about their domestic lives. All this I found out when I knew them better.

I attended a meeting of the Fabian Society, and was rather shocked by the respectability of the audience; still, they were so friendly to the newcomer and the lecturer was so brilliant and amusing and well-informed—it was Bernard Shaw—that I decided to join the Society, and accordingly called on the Secretary, Mr. Edward Pease, in Hyde Park Mansions, a block of flats in Chapel Street, Edgware Road. There I met Pease, wearing a Liberty tie and smoking a pipe, with rather a brusque manner. I was a little chilled. Presently, his wife, Marjorie Pease, came in, with a woman friend called Emma Brooke (the author of a book of some note in its day, called "A Superfluous Woman"), who were very friendly and welcoming. I was then about seventeen years old; and I suppose Emma Brooke was not far short of fifty. She took a fancy to me as a bright boy, very serious and evidently enthusiastic and rather shy.

Of the adult Fabians, Sidney Webb was her particular hero, with Graham Wallas running him close; and to Sidney Webb she introduced me at the first opportunity. She absolutely mothered me. I remember that shortly after I had joined the Fabians I was knocked over by an epidemic influenza. I didn't much worry, but I must have been pretty bad, for if I got out of bed for any purpose I had to ring for my landlady to help me into bed again. She was a nice little country soul from Wales, with no children of her own, and she was very good to me. During that illness, Emma Brooke used to come down from Hampstead nearly every day to look after me and sponge my face and comb my hair. When I got better, Sidney Webb and Bernard Shaw took me down to Brighton for a week-end to freshen me up. Webb was rather conscience-stricken and worried that I was being diverted from my medical work by Socialism. I had already put my name on the list for giving lectures all over the country, for which work I had no particular talent.

At this stage, the Society had no paid secretary and no paid clerk—I suppose that a charwoman must have been engaged to clean out the hall where the meetings were held and the lectures given, or perhaps that was included in the rent. But the voluntary secretarying was done by Pease, and letters and messages were sent out from Hyde Park Mansions. One day, Bernard Shaw was addressing envelopes in this flat, and I volunteered to help him. I walked up the numerous stairs and rang the bell. No one answered. I waited some little while, and then tentatively rang again. In a few seconds the door was opened by the great man himself, and his speech remains in my memory as clearly as if it had been uttered five minutes ago. It was this: "When a gentleman does not answer the door at once, you may always assume that he's in the water-closet and won't be long." I have heard a good many of Shaw's brilliant and humorous speeches since that day, but few as terse as that one.

The early Fabians, of course, stood for alert permeation, and had no desire to form a separate party. Members were advised to join all sorts of local bodies, Conservative or Liberal, Church or Chapel; to get elected on committees, and there to get some Fabian ideas accepted and adopted. After a while, I reacted against this unexciting, milk-and-water Socialism, as it seemed to me, and resigned from the Society. Later, about 1908, I rejoined, and again took an active part in the work. Everyone treated me well and kindly. I remember visiting the Webbs in Grosvenor Terrace, facing the Thames; I think Christopher Turnour was there, and everything went apparently smoothly. But at the end, I had a sudden feeling of oppression and rage. I cannot now recall what could have been taking place in my mind, but my sister tells me that she remembers my walking up and down the Embankment outside the Webbs' house, demanding bombs to throw down their area; and finally going home to dash off a letter of resignation, with reasons given, chapter and verse. One summer, years later, the Webbs rented a house between Oakshott and Ropley, about five miles from our house, and we asked them over to lunch, saying that we would fetch them. Clifford Sharp was staying with us, and was at the lunch-party. I drove Mrs. Webb over from Ropley in a two-seater Canadian gig, and my sister fetched Webb in a coster donkey-barrow. The barrow was given a good start, and we all arrived home pretty much together. The lunch was a great success, and all went well.

I got rather sentimental, recalling how frightfully kind Webb had been to me when I was a youth—those trips to Brighton, week-ends at Limpsfield, and the rest—when Mrs. Webb threw rather a chill on the proceedings with the remark: "I think it was just after the last time we saw Dr. Roberts that he sent in his resignation to the Fabian Society, on the ground that he couldn't stand those damned prigs the Webbs."

I did my best to laugh the thing off, with the usual references to the silly things one had done and said in earlier life, and how little they meant, and a sort of harmony was resumed. We took our guests back to Ropley, and I remember being struck by the skill with which Mrs. Webb li a wood fire on the open hearth by throwing bits of crumpled paper and sticks of dry wood nonchalantly from her chair.

Writing two years ago, I gave it as my present opinion that "by thousands of lectures given by informed members of the Society, in halls and meeting-places throughout the country, and even more by the wide dissemination of well-written and factually accurate pamphlets on almost every political and economic issue, the Fabian Society has unostentatiously influenced the course of domestic and industrial legislation in England during the last forty years, to a far greater degree than has been achieved by any comparable organisation." The two members of the Fabian Society who have directly and indirectly influenced the course of social politics in this country to a greater extent than any two men before in our history are Sidney Webb and Bernard Shaw, though nearly all their work has been done behind the scenes.

In these short reminiscences I have said nothing about Graham Wallas, that university Don with an austere flat in Great Ormond Street furnished with many good books; nothing of Sidney Olivier and the Coxes, who spent so much of their time at Limpsfield—then very different from what it is to-day. All the Cox daughters were statuesquely handsome in a rather Pre-Raphaelite manner, and one of them was designed by Emma Brooke to marry me; but, having other views, she married into the Ministry of Health. Another, of course, married Olivier, whose Socialism was of the high philosophical order—mixed with the theories of Hegel and his like. I have said nothing about William Clarke; nothing about Hubert Bland of the black-ribboned eyeglass, and his Tory Socialist satellite, Robert Dell; nothing about Edith Nesbit, Bland's future wife; nothing about the Dryhursts of Hampstead and their daughter Sylvia—now Sylvia Lynd—whom I used to dangle on my knee; nothing about Charlotte Wilson who "moved on" to Voluntary Anarchism. This last creed, by the way, had its humours; for the printers of her paper *Freedom*, disapproving of her policy, seized the type and press, and—disbelieving in property—she refused to take steps to recover them.

HARRY ROBERTS

THE MOVIES

"L'Eternel Retour," "Les Epaves," "Le ciel est a nous"

"To-morrow—the World," at London Pavilion

M. Cocteau's *L'Eternel Retour* is different from anything else we have seen on a screen, and different for a good reason. It keeps hold of the past. Now, films are—considered as an art-form—a negation of the past; they succeed by actuality; their masterpieces are out of date after a dozen years; they scrap and begin again; and history started with the invention of the photographic plate. The few successful historical films have been *tours-de-force*: illuminations to a progress of years that the camera can't seriously touch. *L'Eternel Retour* goes far beyond them in its poetic awareness of the past. M. Cocteau provides the exception to what I have just been saying, for he delights, with a mastery that may appear strange to the filmgoer, in recreating universal legend in light and tangible form. He has discovered, on the stage, a whole world of tragedy that had seemed to go out with the telephone and the motor car: his Jocasta is strangled, it will be remembered, by her scarf catching in the car axle, as happened to Isadora Duncan. Does he have to provide an image of Death? It shall be a masked woman wearing rubber gloves and a surgeon's coat. This interplay of modern and classical, legend and anecdote, is magically woven on the stage. He displays, there, an incomparable lightness and balance, giving indeed to his actors the charm of acrobats performing miracles at the Cirque d'Hiver. But on the screen? Here he has the literalness of the camera to contend with, but, as it turns out, little else; and being an artist of volatile sensibility, he comes near to using the medium as his own. If *L'Eternel Retour* doesn't quite match his triumphs of stage and page (*La Machine Infernale*, say, and *Opium*), we can put it down to the director, Jean Delannoy, to film tradition, to M. Cocteau himself, or more probably to a combination of the three. Nevertheless, this is a very remarkable film which creates its own standards. It attains its legendary atmosphere, as one might expect, by the simplest of means: a sunlit château, in that château a woman walking along corridors, a man pottering over a collection of old weapons, behind one of the doors their son—a dwarf. Probably you have never seen a dwarf in a film before: M. Cocteau counts on that. Visually, this little monster wakes one's eye from its usual surface dream. The personages of the Tristan-Pelléas theme are overtaken quickly by Fate. A drunken brawl in a nearby harbour tavern (this scene is admirably stylised) brings the lovers together. They fall in love, out again, they ride on a horse to the château, where the dwarf empties a phial marked "Poison" into their cocktails; it contains a love potion which the girl has accepted, laughing, from her old nurse. By such instruments of fate, ironically pointed, their tragic love is pushed to its climax; sometimes the classic theme is there entire, as it were, in translation; sometimes we are fascinated by a domestic life as pungent, say, as Mr. Eliot's *Family Reunion* or the breakfast table in a Compton-Burnett novel; and the two are miraculously welded. I have no space now to write more of this film, which is the first tragedy (in the strict sense) that has come to the screen, but I hear that the Academy is to give it a run shortly. Obviously, it is off the track, but equally obviously—to me—it is among the three or four films of the war years that can claim to have advanced the film as an art. It was seen by the press last week, together with two other films that deserve showing: *Epaves*, a splendid documentary of shipwreck and undersea forests in the Mediterranean, and a rather moving overlong story of local air pioneers called *Le ciel est à nous*.

After all the stories of Nazi terror, of the death-van and the concentration camp, the twelve-year-old little villain of *To-morrow—the World* brings the master race nearer our doorstep. To find the doctrine of blood and soil, Hitler worship, Jew-baiting, diplomacy and murder upheld by a child among normal children administers a sharp shock. Still, a good play has made a goodish film. Mr. Frederic March and Miss Betty Field welcome into their happy American home the scion of destruction (Skippy Homeier, a vivid but too detestable portrait); he almost kills a playmate, he is badly beaten up (delighted gurgles from the un-Nazi audience), he bursts into tears over a present and will be given another chance. "If you and I," says Miss Field, "can't turn one little child into a human being, then heaven help the world when we have to deal with 12,000,000 of them!" We have reached the beating-up stage. Heaven help us indeed.

William Whitebait

RADIO NOTES

Last week I suggested, in writing of *Red Star*, that something would have to be done about the technique of this kind of programme if we are not to become hopelessly callous to the effect it tries to achieve. There is too much dead wood left over from 1929, too much rhetorical claptrap, too much perfunctory music used merely to fill gaps and to bolster up flatly written narration: all this needs drastic re-thinking. There have been a good many "experimental" programmes, of one sort or another, in recent years; but in all cases their producers were hampered by the knowledge that the result was going on to the air. What we really need is a radio workshop where all kinds of experiment, affecting all kinds of broadcast, could be carried on parallel to the ordinary services, but *not* broadcast. When a discovery was made, or a rudimentary technique (e.g., choral speaking) perfected, these would be studied by producers with a view to considering how far they could usefully modify existing methods. An unsuccessful experiment made in this way would not have the damping effect of one which is broadcast, fails to ring the bell, and is roundly abused for its pains. I was told recently that just such a workshop was in fact set up in France some while ago, and that some interesting results have been achieved.

When listening to the last instalment of "To Start You Talking" I was agreeably impressed by the excellent effect of the recorded dramatisations introduced into the discussion to illustrate points made by the speakers. These had the "crystallised" effect of very good photographs or blue-prints passed round a table; the obvious fact that they were pre-recorded was beneficial: it sharpened the outlines of a moment of formality introduced into an informal discussion. And the further fact that the recordings were made by actors added, as it were, another dimension to the proceedings. These programmes have developed into some of the best broadcasts of the week, and they seem to me to prove that rehearsal need not destroy the effect of spontaneity, while doing away with the dreadful let-down that occurs when someone's wits momentarily desert him. This particular programme was on Punishment, and a lot of good sense was talked in a most vivid and sympathetic way. Previous programmes, on local accents and class distinctions, were recalled to us, most pertinently, by the speakers chosen on this occasion. They all contributed something worth hearing, but I thought the patronising manner of Mr. Basil Henriques unfortunate, in the circumstances; it suggested superior knowledge which did not, in the outcome, appear to be there.

Full marks for *The Harbour Called Mulberry*. Those who heard *Junction X* will not need to be told that Cecil McGivern is a most careful and imaginative producer. There was no "saluting" here, no false emphasis or rhetoric, no near-poetry. The story of this great engineering achievement is of epical size and quality, and it was magnificently told. The grave yet resplendent voice of Valentine Dyall made a perfect Narrator, and the way in which he was made to jump in and out of the scene was most adroit. Music was very fully and always justifiably used; the dramatic construction was expert; and I thought the cast extremely well produced. In such a programme it is right that no particular part should stand out from the others, but listeners will not have failed to notice one moment of quite startling reality from a wounded soldier, in whom I thought I recognised the voice of Jonathan Field. In the sequences describing the building of the floating harbours the producer demonstrated how effective Expressionist technique can be in radio, if discreetly, and above all anxiously, used. An enthralling entertainment which did everything it set out to do.

Listeners are advised that the English service from Paris, about which I wrote a few weeks back, will give its first programme at 6.30 on March 11th.

Recommendations.—March 11. Songs by Hugo Wolf sung by Pierre Bernac (in Music Magazine); Symphony Concert (Brahms Second Piano Concerto: soloist, Iso Elinson); Brahms Clarinet Trio.

March 12. Professor Gilbert Murray on "What went wrong with the League"; "Cyrano de Bergerac."

March 13. "What does it Mean?": Cheap Money, by W. F. Crick, and Evidence, by Charles Williams.

March 15. "To Start you Talking"—about Parliament; *Air-List for Yugoslavia* (Pudney); Schubert's Piano Sonata in C minor (Kentner).

March 16. "Paper for Books" (discussion); "So this is Man!" (Nesta Pain feature).

March 17. Symphony Concert (Bax: Violin Concerto).

Edward Sackville West

TWO EXHIBITIONS

The three artists exhibiting at the Leicester Galleries are already well known to amateurs of painting. Thomas Carr is an Irishman, and in his best work there is that poetry which we think of as Celtic: the fabulous light that falls from the Irish sky gives many of his landscapes the bloom you find on grapes. In his larger paintings the texture becomes rather heavy and lumpy, but in the small panels he uses oil as if it were water-colour with delicious results. *Landing Obstacle, Dundrum Bay*, for instance, is a most covetable work, a little triumph of vision and selection. It is a pleasure to come upon such imaginative painting. Robert Buhler, in his pursuit of delicate and decorative colour arrangement, makes his pictures rather flat, but in *School House, Borden*, for instance, a foreground with little incident in it is made to recede in fact very effectively. *Table with Cups*, and *Snow, Borden Wood*, are two other delightful works. His sensibility is acute, and he composes well. Lawrence Gowing, with little explicit concern for either the poetic or decorative, concentrates on what might be called pure painting, and he paints exquisitely: in such pictures as *Still Life, Apples*, the method entirely justifies itself by the intensity of feeling made manifest. Two pictures of chrysanthemums and one of orchids are in the same way exemplary. Of a number of landscapes, *Lane at Stilbourne* is the most entirely successful. Mr. Gowing, the catalogue states, is only twenty-six, and it is obvious that he is determined not to exhibit any work that outruns his present abilities. The colour he attains in his apples and flowers is very fine, but I look forward to the day when he uses the full orchestra of pigments, bringing in the brass and the woodwind, and the harp and the percussion, to contrast with the strings.

The exhibition of religious paintings and engravings at the Leger Gallery is due to the praiseworthy initiative of the Central Committee of Industry and Design and of Messrs. Mowbray. The Bishop of Chichester has for some time been seeking to rescue religious art from the squalor of *bondieuserie*, and this exhibition reflects the difficulties of this admirable project. A number of the painters follow, not very happily, in the footsteps of Stanley Spencer. Others are content to paint a roadside scene in modern England and call it *The Flight into Egypt*. I doubt whether any of us think of St. Joseph (or for that matter of Apollo) in modern clothes; and so such imitations of what was natural before the development of the historic sense fails to make the impression of sincerity. Far the best picture in the exhibition is a *Last Supper* by Matthew Smith, who applies modern brushwork to a traditional composition and drapery. Otherwise Elizabeth Watson, Denis Mathews, and Robert Russell are the artists who have managed most successfully to steer between self-conscious modernity and imitative decadence. H. A. Finney and N. B. Town contribute good drawings.

Roger Marvell

THE EMPTY CHAIR

General Roatta, Fascist Chief of the Italian General Staff, having escaped, the judge ruled that the trial would proceed in spite of this grievous event . . . and the defence counsel proceeded to defend an empty chair.—Report in Manchester Guardian, *March* 6th.

Here stands my client, hounded by his foes,
A Fascist, innocent of Fascist crime.
A Party Member, but as Rome well knows,
A patriot of purity sublime.
I now demand a hearing full and fair
For this stout-hearted, straight and upright chair.

This General I am honoured to defend,
Is no accursed collaborationist,
But might indeed have called Badoglio friend,
He too dared all the Axis to resist.
One man has brought us ruin and despair,
Il Duce, not this honourable chair.

Let *him* return and stand before the Law,
His crimes and treason none can vindicate!
The baseless charges let the Court withdraw—
The Chief of Staff is not the Head of State.
The Leader's guilt this General does not share,
Discharge this blameless, anti-Fascist chair.

My client should not stand here on his trial,
His innocence is written on his face:
A patriot—but is a patriot vile?
A soldier—is a soldier's honour base?
A general and a patriot stand there—
I claim full justice for this valiant chair.

If this chair could but sit upon that Bench
And to this Bar his own accusers call,
Not he, but those false witnesses would blench—
Let us have justice though the heavens fall!
The Prosecution speaks to empty air!
There is no case against this empty chair.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to J. E. Aylen.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Needless to say I have no children myself, although I have been married five years, and thanks to my mother's good advice I do not intend to have any. If every mother advised her daughters the same way it would be a much happier world. It is, of course, a matter of opinion, but I say let everyone carry their own burden.—Letter in *Sunderland Echo.*

This is not the only town in Somerset which has reason for complaint. In one other place the same van which removes a dead body to the mortuary one day is used to deliver foodstuffs the next.—Report in *Bridgwater Mercury.*

Ealing magistrates decided yesterday that, because a cocktail had never been defined in a Court of Law, and was only what people thought it to be, there was no question of deceiving the public in selling a drink called "Glamorous Nights," alleged by the prosecution to be nothing more than a diluted flavoured cordial, as a cocktail.—Report in *The Times.*

Given away by her father, the bride was dressed in white net with silk and lace foundation, full length veil and orange-blossom coronet. She also had a pearl necklace and carried a sheaf of harem lilies.—From report of wedding in *Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale Guardian.*

Correspondence

FRONTIERS IN AFRICA

SIR,—Miss Rita Hinden's very admirable article in your issue of February 24th raises an issue of supreme importance whose solution seems very far away, in spite of the attention that has been paid to it lately. The African problem—to state this complexity in its utmost simplicity—has occupied my attention since I went to live in South Africa in 1936. At that time the late J. A. M. Hertzog was busily urging the claims of the Union of South Africa to the High Commission territories. I was in the fortunate position of spending considerable periods in Basutoland and of speaking Sesuto, and thus I was able personally to test some representative opinion. My impression was that the Basuto were almost unanimously opposed to amalgamation with the Union of South Africa. Experience since then has led to the conclusion that Africans everywhere are opposed to white men's plans of Pan-Africanism. This opposition seems to me all the more striking in face of the obvious advantages (or, at least, the apparent advantages) of regional readjustment.

Closer union of African States should have the effect of bringing economic advantages to Africans and Europeans. It would end certain rather anomalous situations, such as the present dependence of Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland upon the Union of South Africa. (The isolation of Basutoland, its small area and inland position bring it inevitably within the sphere of influence of the Union.) The amalgamation of African territories should lead to closer association of African tribes and to the growth of nationhood in supercession to present tribalism and to the widening of cultural contacts.

The need for a consistent continental policy is as obvious in Central and Southern Africa as it is in Europe, with its enormous scope for imaginative planning and its opportunity for escape from the petty tyrannies of tribal chiefs. The opening of communications and the planning and expansion of co-ordinated health and education services are further possible advantages.

The barriers to successful union, or to the formation of a consistent policy of government for subject peoples, are almost entirely ideological. The "native policy" of the Union of South Africa, with pass laws, lack of parliamentary representation, restrictions on ownership of land and property, segregation and repressive legislation in general, is hated and feared by Africans through the continent. The ruling classes of South Africa have, for the most part, strong prejudices against Africans, and resent the idea of African progress or emancipation; and most Africans outside the Union consider incorporation as the end of personal freedom.

The territorial ambitions of the late J. A. M. Hertzog and of J. C. Smuts are naturally suspect in view of the known dependence of the gold mines and farmers on African labour. Most of the workers on the Rand mines have their homes outside the Union, in Basutoland, Portuguese East Africa, Northern Rhodesia, etc. The possibility—which is almost a probability—of a Republican-Fascist government in South Africa after the war increases the distrust with which we must view proposals for enlarging the Union's sphere of influence.

Finally, it has to be stressed again and again that Britain made promises to certain of the African peoples, and that fact should still carry weight. When the growing enlightenment of European opinion in Southern Africa has borne fruit in more liberal policies, the Africans may judge it wise to share more closely in the economic advantages of amalgamation.

ERROLL WILMOT

THE COUNTRYSIDE

SIR,—I wonder if your correspondent, C. E. H. Master, has inspected many farm cottages rented at 3s. per week?

Scarcely any cottages have been built on the English countryside in the past fifty years. Many are over 100 years old, not a few were built more than 200 years ago. Interior walls so damp tha contents of adjacent cupboards are covered with mildew, sinks without taps or wastepipes, no indoo sanitation, closets at the end of the garden, water to be drawn from a well several hundred yards from the cottage; such are the amenities of farm cottages.

The farmworker can grow nothing which an energetic townsman cannot obtain by working an allotment. The allotment quotas are seldom fully taken up.

Free milk is by no means universal. Wood rabbits have not featured much in the conversation of farmhands in my hearing. How many rabbits would your correspondent care to consume each week? The food value of the potato is greatly exaggerated.

The alternative to the tied cottage is the non-tied cottage, wherever it is. In the present acute shortage of accommodation a farmhand is very often obliged to remain with a bad employer because another employer has no house to offer. That any employee should depend upon his employer for housing is undesirable. That any employee should be turned out of his home when he leaves to take another job in the same district is monstrous. Often the terms of the tenancy of a tied cottage involve duties for the farmhand's wife in the household of the farmer. Not all tied cottages are near the men's work, as your correspondent would suggest. Today farmers are buying up premises as tied houses wherever they can get them. The attractions of the tied cottage to the employer are not always connected with access to work.

These factors cannot be ignored by the agricultural workers' unions in making claims for higher wages and the abolition of the tied cottage.

W. H. ROBERTSON

Guildford Secretary,
National Union of Agricultural Workers,
4, Glebe House, Guildford.

SIR,—As a small farmer I agree with much of wha Mr. Sidney Dark says about the countryside. I am all for better wages, better conditions and no tied cottages, yet I find myself as much out of sympathy with the general tone of his article as I do with the most sentimental rubbish written by townsmen who week-end in country cottages.

Although the words quoted from the Rev. J. V. L Casserley's book, "Nature is an awe-inspiring adversary with which he wrestles as Jacob wrestled thro the night at Peniel, in which he sees God face to face and by which his life is preserved," is hardly the way the average farm chap would express himself, the ide behind it all seems right enough to me. I have sampled both worlds, and I know there is a vast difference between the man-made factory and the field. Nature is eliminated from the factory (except for its human occupants), but in the field—on the farm —it certainly is something to be wrestled with. I is just this thing which divides the townsman from his country cousin. To the townsman science and mechanisation are triumphant, but the countryman knows that nature always wins in the end.

Country people have a right to be suspicious of this glib prescription of mechanisation. They have not seen it work so well in the towns, where there has always been plenty of poverty, some quite bad living accommodation and even a lot of boredom. When i comes to production there is absolutely no evidence that mechanisation of the English countryside wil increase it to its maximum. It would, of course increase *output per man* to its maximum, but to increase output per acre to its maximum, the desirable object surely in Britain, very intensive farming i necessary, and this means livestock. You can mechanise that!

I hope that progressive people can think up some better remedy than mechanisation. We want all the labour-saving machinery we can get on our farms, but we do not want mechanisation as a policy. The two are often confused, but they are not the same. And we cannot afford to neglect the human element More than half the farmers in this country are small farmers (under 50 acres). Nearly all are small compared with the industrialists' dream of large and "efficient" mechanised undertakings. Even so the have done a good job in this war, supplying the nation with 70 per cent. of its necessary food from a diminished area of farm land. Would their efficiency be increased if they were all put on tractors? I doubt it, and I know for certain they would lose something as individuals which even shorter hours, better pay—even sinks and cinemas would not compensate them for. Maybe it is not exactly the parson's God which the ploughman sees "face to face." Perhaps it is not even God at all, but there is something about the countryside which is not very noticeable in a factory, and so many people imagine they see it that half the chaps in the Army want to go farming when the war is over, and you can't buy a small farm for love or money! J. B. THORBURN

Bonscombe Farm,
Shipton Gorge,
Bridport, Dorset.

SIR,—I don't think Mr. Sidney Dark has quite hit the nail on the head in his recent article "The Countryside." Or perhaps things are different in the North.

We live in a small hamlet with no pub. or post-office, 4 miles from a railway station, 8 miles from the market town; the 'bus, three times in the week, goes to town at 10 a.m. and returns at 3 p..m. The hamlet lies in a valley given over to dairy farming and is "very beautifully situated." There are three small tenant-farmers, a smallholder, a farm labourer (and their dependents), and three non-farming households in the hamlet. None of these people would exchange their life for one behind counters or in a factory. One son in a farming family would prefer to be in a garage, but he happens to be a bit of a genius at garage mechanics. All of them say that there is something in a life out of doors which makes up for the absence of a near-by cinema. The young ones find their amusement in dancing and courting and get plenty of fun out of it. They don't want the village urbanised; they put sinks in their own kitchens for themselves, though they admit they could do with more water for baths. Nearly all the farmers' sons go into farming, and the few labourers mostly save enough to get a small farm of their own early in life. Their wives hoot at the idea of being slaves, though they work hours unknown to the townswoman.

There is both "pride of place" and a depth of sentiment which roots these people to the soil and gives them a feeling of superiority to those in towns: the worst they can say of a man newly wed is, "'E found 'is wife in Woolworth's."

A FARMER'S WIFE

WATER IN RURAL AREAS

SIR,—In your last issue it is stated that "one house in three in rural areas has no piped water."

I should like very much to know what is the authority for this statement. From my own experience, I should doubt very much whether even two *villages* in three have piped water, and it is not fully appreciated that these supplies are often nothing more than a few standpipes in the village streets from which householders have to fetch water in buckets, at an inconvenience almost equal to that involved in resorting to the village pump.

In a survey of fifteen villages in a rural area made recently, six only had piped water, and a house-to-house census in one of these showed that only two houses in five were connected to the water main. C. S. ORWIN

Agricultural Economics Research Institute,
Parks Road, Oxford.

BARGE CHILDREN

SIR,—I was appalled by the attitude taken by Phyllis Pebody to boating families, and would like to take this opportunity, as another amateur boater, of endorsing the admiration felt by Muriel Trevor for the people amongst whom we are so proud to be working.

Appearances may be deceptive, especially very dirty ones (and who can keep clean on this job?), but it is amazing that someone with such opportunities of studying these people should see no further than skin deep. Or is it perhaps the position of detached observer that causes such apparent horror as to what "goes on" (and what *does* go on?) on the canal. May I suggest that rather than invite guests to her house on the lock side to watch the fun, Phyllis Pebody herself makes a trip to Birmingham and gets to know, not only some of the people on the job, but the conditions under which they are working.

As to there being no "A1 specimens on the entire canal," I suggest Phyllis Pebody makes the acquaintance of George Smith—on the "Barham"—or his sister Lil, working with their father and mother, who has taught herself to read and write; Bill Beresford, on the "Star" and "Betelegeuse," and his father and younger brother on the "Elm" and "Ash" (a fine old man who, in the days of horse boats, used to wear a clean pair of white corduroy trousers every week, and thrash his children if they did not clean their boots before stepping on the newly mopped decks!). The four Wilson brothers and their families, their mother and father, still working boats of their own (No A1's, to whom Mr. Rolt dedicated his book), to mention only a few "specimens" which make many of us seem feeble not only in body but mind.

They have fine and loveable characters. As to their upbringing, I should say that boaters teach their children to be observant, and helpful to those in difficulties, to take pride in their boats (take one look into their gleaming, spotless cabins), to work unremittingly, and while working to obey orders, to observe an independent spirit, and in sexual relationships to observe the strict moral code of the "cut." In their turn there can be no doubt that they are extremely proud and fond of their children.

There are naturally exceptions, but even these are surely better off than the child born in a slum? There are difficulties, but these are caused by bad working conditions, not lack of parental care. An unfair system of payment and cramped living space, for, let there be no mistake, the system of payment by freightage adopted by the carrying companies is simply a clever way of getting these people to work as hard as is humanly possible and to exploit child and female labour; when only the steerer of a pair of boats is employed by the company, he has neither money nor space enough to employ a mate if he has a family to keep, and that is why the children cannot in many cases be sent to school.

Bull's Bridge Depot, CHATTIE SALAMAN
Southall, Middlesex.

TELEPATHY

SIR,—In his article on telepathy Dr. Joad tells us that he has actually met a human being, "percipient P," who can foretell the future at least one minute ahead—not absolutely accurately, of course, but "with odds of more than 10^{35} to 1 against chance." This is the news we sceptics have been waiting for all our lives. We are far more credulous than these scientific experimenters with the supernatural will ever credit. Why fritter away time and money on millions of experiments with animal faces on cards and wretched undergraduates closeted for ten years in separate rooms, and even in separate quadrangles? Just *one* successful demonstration will satisfy us for ever of their theory—and we will allow "percipient P" to be in the same room as A the agent, and we shall be completely satisfied, not with astronomical odds, but, say, 36 to 1 against chance. But let it be in the public rooms at Monte Carlo, and let us for an evening be E.P., the lucky controllers of the percipient, who rake in the millions.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

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EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE

AN OFFER OF CITIZENSHIP

SIR,—Mr. Churchill offers British citizenship to those Poles in the fighting services who may not wish to return to Poland. Why does the Editor of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION term this suggestion so "very wise"? Which section of the Poles would that comprise? Surely those whose political ideology does not encourage them to return to their country, liberated by the Soviet soldiers, with a government helped by the Soviet Union. Could these Poles be welcome British citizens?

In all sections of the Army there are Austrian and German refugees, fighting and dying—people without passport, without government. No offer of citizenship has been made to these men (though, oh! irony, they have been allowed to adopt English surnames). No indication has as yet been given by the Government as to their and their families' status after the war.

It looks as though only those will be given British citizenship who are declared enemies of the Soviet Union, nor the anti-Fascists.

INGE JABLONSKY

[There is a clear case for offering British citizenship to aliens who have served in the British forces, most of whom are volunteers, many serving in combatant units. We should do well to adopt the American precedent and grant citizenship to aliens who have fought with our troops.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

FAMILY ALLOWANCES

SIR,—We are glad to see in your issue of February 24th your criticism of the Family Allowances Bill on the ground of the inadequacy of the allowance. Since no private member can move an amendment asking for greater expenditure of Government money, there is little chance of this being altered in the present Bill.

But another blemish which could, with sufficient pressure, probably be changed, is the astonishing provision that where a man and wife live together the children's allowances "will belong to the man." And this, apparently, even if the children are the wife's by a former marriage. The allowance can only be taken from the man if a Court of Summary Jurisdiction so advises on proof of his unworthiness.

Although the proportion of greedy and neglectful fathers is probably small—out of two and a half million families they may actually represent a larger number. Such men are likely to hold on to the money, and few wives will dare appeal to the Court. This provision flouts all previous experience. New Zealand and, more recently, the Australian Commonwealth and U.S.S.R., all pay their children's allowances to the mother, except where she is proved unsuitable.

Payment to the mother has also been demanded by 160 Members of Parliament of all parties in a Memorial to the Minister in charge of the Bill. May we remind you that the Labour Party at its recent conference recommended allowances should be paid to the mother as some recognition to motherhood? The present proposal will have exactly the opposite effect, indicating that the State still regards the mother merely as a dependant and giving a strong inducement to women to go out and work for wages which are legally theirs rather than bear more children.

May we beg your readers to write at once to their Parliamentary representatives and to Sir William Jowitt urging a change in this connection?

E. HUBBACK,
Family Endowment Society. Vice-Chairman

NO FOOD PROBLEM

SIR,—Just before I left England in November last I noticed articles appearing in the press, the purport of which was that there is really no food problem in Europe, and that we have been wasting our sympathy by believing the terrible stories of starvation.

About a fortnight after being assured by an officer (who had spent a week in Athens) that "the people are happy and well fed; I saw no evidence of starvation," I was told the following story by a seaman.

"I went ashore with my pal at a Greek port. We loaded up with tins of bully. You could throw a tin of bully on a counter anywhere and take what you wanted. I spent all mine, and said to my pal, 'What about getting back?' 'No,' he said, 'I've got three tins left. I'm going to get a woman for them.' He got talking to a lovely woman, and asked her 'What about it?' She wouldn't give an answer straight away, but said she would return in ten minutes. She came back and said, 'I've asked my husband, and he says I can for the sake of our two children.' He chucked the —— bully on the table and ran out of the place."

There is no food problem!

Three tins of bully equals one virtuous wife.

CIVILIAN RELIEF WORKER

SHELLEY AND HARRIET

SIR,—Some of the points which Dr. Harry Roberts mentions are cleared up in Dr. Leslie Hotson's book "Shelley's Lost Letters to Harriet" (*Faber*, 1930). Briefly the facts are these

After Lord Eldon had deprived Shelley of the custody of his two children on March 27th, 1817, he appointed William Alexander, a Master in Chancery, to consider what would be a proper plan for the maintenance and education of the children and in whose custody they should remain.

Shelley proposed that the children should be placed in the care of his solicitor, Pynson Wilmot Longdill of Grays Inn. John and Elizabeth Westbrook thereupon submitted to Mr. Alexander the name of the Rev. John Kendall, of Warwick, as a suitable guardian. (He had already had the children in his care before Harriet died) on July 19th, 1817. Mr. Alexander approved of Mr. Kendall, but an appeal was made to the Lord Chancellor by Mr. Longdill, and the matter referred back to Mr. Alexander. Shelley now put forward the name of Thomas Hume, of Hanwell, M.D., F.R.C.P., Physician to H.M. Forces, and to the Duke of Cambridge, while the Westbrooks proposed the Rev. Jacob Cheesbrough, of Ulcomb, Kent.

On March 9th, 1818, Mr. Alexander decided in favour of Dr. and Mrs. Hume, and they thereupon became the guardians of the four-year-old Eliza Ianthe and the two-year-old Charles Bysshe. The latter died in 1826, and Eliza Ianthe married in 1837 Mr. Edward Jefferies Esdaile. She died in 1876, having had four sons and three daughters.

Croft Watermillock, C. ROY HUDLESTON
Nr. Penrith.

SIR,—In the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION for February 24th I contributed a letter in which I said that the facts I was about to mention would probably be news to every reader. But I am glad to say I was wrong. A journalist, evidently much better informed in the matter than myself, Mr. G. M. G., etc., has supplemented my "news" by a much fuller account of the career of Ianthe Esdaile, the daughter of Shelley and Harriet. My correspondent tells me that some time after Shelley's death Ianthe was consigned to the care of her aunt, Eliza Westbrook, "who married a Somerset landowner and was at last considered a suitable guardian for her niece. Whilst living with her aunt and uncle-in-law, Ianthe met Edward Esdaile, and they were married in (I think) 1837. Edward, after an accident in the hunting-field, fell under the influence of the Rev. Francis Close, a fervent Evangelical, and began to lead a devout, serious and charitable life in which Ianthe shared. They had several children." The writer of this letter gives me permission to publish it, and he would welcome any further information on the subject that any of your readers are able to give.

HARRY ROBERTS

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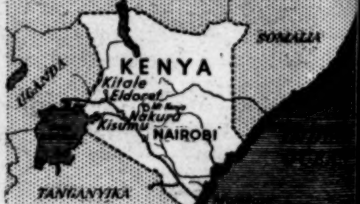

KENYA COLONY, which lies on either side of the Equator between the Indian Ocean and Lake Victoria, has an area of some 225,000 square miles. It is a land of sharp contrasts, not only in climate and scenery—but in the character of its native people. The waterless deserts of the northern area, the rolling well wooded uplands of the Aberdare Range, the meat-eating Masai Warriors and the pastoral vegetarian Kikuyu tribes, are all found in close proximity in this romantic country.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld are handed down from generation to generation like a tray of diamonds that ravish the eye of the inheritors but alarm their instinct of self-preservation. Secretively we unlock the safe to gaze at this cold, controlled and fiery display; and in some moods, it must be confessed, the perfection is monotonous; and then, when we think of the enormous pressure of thought and experience that has produced each one of these stones, when we think of the *salons* where they were tested and of the years that would point a sentence and sharpen a facet by the removal of a word, we lock up again and creep away with the pride and disquiet of misers. The *Maximes* are often disapproved, for it is hard to accept a pessimism so perfect and unyielding; but they have always and most mysteriously given the approving and disapproving reader a sense of power. They have put a rapier in our hand. We can go out now and attack. We feel stronger, harder, less assailable for knowing the worst about human nature which is rather flattered than put out of countenance by being damned. And here lies the one serious moral criticism which may be made out of La Rochefoucauld; are we sure that he has shown us human nature at its worst? Are we sure he has not very often shown it merely at its second best?

Lord Chesterfield advised his son to read the *Maximes* in the mornings in order that he could test them in the evenings on the characters and behaviour of his friends. The *Maximes* might, indeed, be treated as a game. But Rousseau, their enemy, saw their frightening seriousness. "That sad book," he said, exhausted by the enormity of La Rochefoucauld's error. The generosity of the eighteenth century lies between us and the philosophy of self-love and self-interest. It is a philosophy which we find hard to endure, not because it is untrue but because it is ubiquitous. We can accept Molière's use of it because he had his feet on the earth and his head in the lively sunlight of good sense. But La Rochefoucauld, and especially those who followed him, become tedious in their obsession. We do not object to the idea but we object that it is a fixed idea. Yet, despite the strength of this objection, the response to the *Maximes* is immediate, and our pleasure is not marred by the quarrel. Our pleasure has nothing to do with morals at all. We respond not to a judgment but to a definition. It is the kind of pleasure we get from a scientific mind, even when the science is out of date. Charming moralists like Vauvenargues have to be revived; the generalities of La Bruyère are unopened; but La Rochefoucauld, who rarely moralised and always dissected, must be the most quoted of disapproved writers.

Obviously we who have been brought up on the determinism of Marx and Freud, who are not distressed by the unflattering insinuations of the psychologists or the fate stamped upon us at birth by the economists, have a special inclination to look twice at a man with a fixed idea. We like the concise and dynamic writers. It is not hard for us who have learned how elaborately we hate our fathers to hear how exclusively we love ourselves. But there is another more suggestive tie between the mind of La Rochefoucauld and our sympathies. It is brought out by Mr. F. C. Green in the long and perspicuous introduction he has written to a French text of the *Maximes*;* he has gone to some trouble to relate the author to his time, and it is a time with notable echoes of our own.

La Rochefoucauld was a man of the seventeenth century. He saw the religious wars end in the dictatorship of Richelieu. He saw civil strife continuing long after its original impulse, and breaking up into the disgraceful affrays of the Fronde. La Rochefoucauld was involved in the Fronde. He fought, in so far as any clear cause can be traced through that chaotic fighting, for the feudal cause against the new notions of absolutism. He fought probably for no reason at all, simply because fighting and the intrigues that preceded it had become endemic. Timid, diffident, restless, not a party man by nature, and certainly without the capacity or the will of a leader, La Rochefoucauld caused little trouble to his enemies during the wasted years. And other influences were at work. France was sick of faction: what was the cure? Authority in politics; order in thought; simplicity and classicism in art and literature. In morals, sterilise the individual, translate his turbulent character and his intrusive passions into the less feverish and less flattering laws of his category and type. Descartes was the philosopher who, now he was dead, began to influence the thought of Europe; and, as Mr. Green says, "Cartesianism reflected the aspirations of a generation tired of social chaos and eager for stability, not merely in the political but in every province of human affairs." Men tired of action, who had seen action deteriorate and experience become a wilderness, were glad to turn to deduction and to repose in the assurance of some remote and useful absolute.

That sounds like a prescription for to-day. La Rochefoucauld's distinction is that, in applying it to literature, he declined the moral point of view which took up the minds of his contemporaries and took up a bleaker and scientific one. The *Maximes* are not moral. They are an attempt to define the mechanics of human nature in society. They are a basis. The famous "Hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue" is not meant as an epigram; it is not written in praise of virtue or as an apology for hypocrisy. The words are meant to describe a process, without praise or blame. This is, above all, true of the *Maximes* about self-love or *amour-propre*. La Rochefoucauld did not say that self-love was always an evil. He said that it was a fact, neither evil nor good. His observations are clinical.

> Il y a de bons mariages, mais il n'y en a point de délicieux.
>
> On ne se peut consoler d'être trompé par ses ennemis et trahi par ses amis, et l'on est souvent satisfait de l'être par soi-même.
>
> On peut dire que les vices nous attendent dans le cours de la vie, comme des hôtes chez qui il faut successivement loger; et je doute que l'expérience nous les fît éviter s'il nous était permis de faire deux fois le même chemin.
>
> La pitié est souvent un sentiment de nos propres maux dans les maux d'autrui; c'est une habile prévoyance des malheurs où nous pouvons tomber; nous donnons du secours aux autres pour les engager à nous en donner en de semblables occasions; et ces services que nous leur rendons sont, à proprement parler, des biens que nous nous faisons à nous-mêmes par avance.

If we take note of these things, he says, we shall not be better, for it is unlikely that men will ever be better; but we shall be less disappointed, we shall be able to come to a working arrangement with our fellow men. Not an inspiring course to show us; who would not sooner be deluded by the fortune-teller we all conceal in our hearts? But La Rochefoucauld must be chosen for his subjects. As a soldier he was a man of outstanding courage, and the following *Maximes* seem to evade theory and to come directly from experience.

> La parfaite valeur et la poltronnerie complète sont deux extrémités où l'on arrive rarement. L'espace qui est entre-deux est vaste et contient toutes les autres espèces de courage; il n'y a pas moins de différence entre elles qu'entre les visages et les humeurs. Il y a des hommes qui s'exposent volontiers au commencement d'une action, et qui se relâchent et se rebutent aisément par sa durée. Il y en a qui sont contents quands ils ont satisfait à l'honneur du monde, et qui font fort peu de chose au delà. On en voit qui ne sont pas toujours également maîtres de leur peur. D'autres se laissent quelquefois entraîner à des erreurs générales; d'autres vont à la charge parce qu'ils n'osent demeurer dans leurs postes. Il s'en trouve à qui l'habitude des moindres périls affermit le courage et les prépare à s'exposer à de plus grands. Il y en a qui sont braves à coups d'épée et qui craignent les coups de mousquet; d'autres sont assuré aux coups de mousquet et apprenendent de se battre à coups d'epée. Tous ces courages de différentes espèces conviennent en ce que, la nuit augmentant la crainte et cachant les bonnes et les mauvaises actions, elle donne la liberté de se ménager. Il y a encore un autre ménagement plus général: car on ne voit point d'homme qui fasse tout ce qu'il serait capable de faire dans une occasion s'il était assuré d'en revenir: de sorte qu'il est visible que la crainte de la mort ôte quelque chose de la valeur.
>
> La parfaite valeur est de faire sans témoins ce qu'on serait capable de faire devant tout le monde.
>
> La plupart des hommes s'exposent assez dans la guerre pour sauver leur honneur; mais peu se veulent toujours exposer autant qu'il est nécessaire pour faire réussir le dessein pour lequel ils s'exposent.

When we speak of the pessimism of La Rochefoucauld we do so with the uneasy sensation that we have not quite hit the right word. Many of his bleakest statements excite and delight us. We are caught by the flash, even the ecstasy, of definition. The purity of the style clears the mind with the precision and sonority of a violin. We do not feel distressed to hear that no man can look fixedly at death any more than he can look at the sun. That is a truth; we feel more powerful for knowing it.

La Rochefoucauld constantly clears our minds and leaves us with this sense of isolation and power. But there is another side to the pessimism of La Rochefoucauld. He actually denies any reality to the sense of power. We may feel strong, he says; we shall never be strong enough. Human beings are not wicked; they are weak, and the weak are incapable of sincerity. They are idle. Idleness is the master-vice:

> Elle usurpe sur tous les desseins et sur toutes les actions de la vie; elle y détruit et y consume insensiblement les passions et les vertus.

And, says the psychologist, in a crushing afterthought, idleness imparts: "Une béatitude de l'âme, qui la console de toutes ses pertes et qui lui tient lieu de tous les biens."

La Rochefoucauld is one of the earliest psychologists. We might echo the words of the critic who wrote to La Rochefoucauld's friend Madame de Sablé: "It might be said that the Christian begins where your philosopher leaves off." But the author of the *Maximes* himself saw the real defect of his method. It was easier, he said, to know man in general than to know man in the particular sense, for the contradictions that dwelt naturally side by side in any single human being confounded the imagination. The error is not pessimism, nor even the belief in frailty; it seems to lie in the fact of trying to fix human nature, in trying to tabulate it; above all, in taking away the movement and in isolating it. His world is too frightened, too static. It is as if La Rochefoucauld were trying to make psychology a pure science; and we might easily invent a psychology like his, based entirely on the hypothesis that human beings were, for example, moved fundamentally by the desire for power over each other. La Rochefoucauld's own isolation and his irresolution led him to exaggerate the role of egoism:

> Ce qui fait que l'on est souvent mécontent de ceux qui négocient est qu'ils abandonnent presque toujours l'intérêt de leurs amis pour l'interêt du succès de la négociation, qui devient le leur par l'honneur d'avoir réussi à ce qu'ils avaient entrepris.

But the success of the affair may also be the interest of the friends involved; in all negotiations we live in each other's lives. The doctrine that we act only by self-interest and self-love, even in moments of sacrifice, was rejected by the eighteenth century when people had emerged from the solitary little abstract boxes into which they had retired after the religious wars, and were ready to move with generosity once more. Ourselves, we are half in one age, half in the other; but the chaos of thirty years has brought La Rochefoucauld's armed, belligerent analysis of human motive and character curiously close in kind, if not in conclusion, to that of many contemporary writers. It is one to which, with some eagerness, we can respond.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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*La Rochefoucauld: *Maximes*. Edited with an introduction by F. C. Green. Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.

TWO NOVELS

All Hallows' Eve. By CHARLES WILLIAMS. *Faber.* *8s. 6d.*

The Only Door Out. By MARY WILKES. *Faber.* *8s. 6d.*

Mr. Charles Williams is one of the most important writers of our time. His prose is rarely easy to read, even when it seems most suited to its subject-matter, for it frequently hypnotises its own author and leads him into a rhapsodic obscurity which is not entirely due to the recondite nature of his material. But two at least of Mr. Williams's books are masterpieces: *The Descent of the Dove* and *The Figure of Beatrice.* These books, the one a biography of the Holy Ghost, the other a piece of expository literary criticism, are creative and imaginative works of a very high order; and though their author has written another book, scarcely less excellent than these, called *Witchcraft,* it is odd to think of him writing "thrillers," or even novels at all. Yet his new novel succeeds, as his poetry, for example, does not. His latest long poem, *The Region of the Summer Stars,* is, to put it mildly, unreadable; and the voluble enthusiasm with which it is written makes it come as doubly distressing from so fine a critic. On the other hand, a novel may grip by subject-matter and contrivance alone, however uninterested in method the author may be; and this happens in *All Hallows' Eve,* which contains most of the faults a novel can contain—including vagueness, dead characterisation and over-stated climaxes—and yet emerges as ten times more interesting than most novels.

One imagines that, to the truly dedicated novelist, "the Novel" is everything; a torment, a nuisance, an obsession, an irresistible vocation. And all that one has read about the writing of them confirms one's belief that the characters, or the sudden fusion in the novelist's mind of character and situation, are the starting-point. The exact opposite appears to have happened in *All Hallows' Eve.* The characters come last. One can discern four stages in the book's construction. First there is the religious *faith* from which all of Mr. Williams's work radiates. His faith provides him with his *theme,* which is witchcraft, the perverted mingling of the living world with the dead. His theme is worked out into an illustrative *plot*: a wizard, attempting to gain equal dominion over the two worlds, is detected by art and frustrated by love. The plot is co-ordinated by means of *characters* devised to carry it out. And the life and spontaneity which are so typical of most of Mr. Williams's work are thinned away almost to nothing by the time we get to the characters—who, after all, are there to establish communication with us and to help us along. It is idle to remind oneself that character does not matter in a thriller; in a thriller which is about people journeying to heaven or to hell, according to their particular natures, one demands a good deal of character. In *All Hallows' Eve* it is the profound and touching emotions that flow from time to time between the characters, rather than the characters themselves, that affect one; it is the occasional glimpses of the love between Richard and his dead wife Lester, rather than Richard and Lester themselves. Similarly with the picture of Jonathan, the artist: one sees the point of him as a symbol—the artist, even the agnostic artist, has a weapon with which to penetrate evil. But Jonathan himself is as unbelievable as his pictures; and one recalls other novelists' equally fatal attempts at describing or presenting imaginary works of art; the sculpture in *Roderick Hudson* and *The Marble Faun,* the poem which Stephen writes, apparently to his author's satisfaction, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

Finally there is Simon the Clerk, the villain of the book; the things he does are nominally horrible, but he is never the revolting warlock he is meant to be. He is even a bit of a bore at times. The wizardry, "the magical creations," are, in fact, the least considerable parts of the book. At the same time, the successful parts of it are so unusually striking, and so tangled up with the rest that one reads on with avidity. The author is so much more richly versed in humanity than most authors that their observations seem adolescent compared with his. There are passages which the greatest of novelists would not despise: the moments of meeting between Richard and Lester, the wonderful atmosphere of that conjectured land in which the two dead girls, the good and the bad, wander just after death: "It lay there, as it always does—itself offering no barriers, open to be trodden, ghostly to this world and to heaven, and in its upper reaches ghostly also to those in its lower reaches where (if at all) hell lies." Despite all the disturbing queries about novel-writing which *All Hallows' Eve* arouses in one's mind, it is a peculiarly wonderful book, with equally disturbing suggestions of permanence about it.

The Only Door Out is also a novel on a religious theme. There is a reference to an earlier novel by Mr. Williams in it; indeed, there are few writers, ancient or modern, not referred to in it; rarely can a book have been so disfiguringly pock-marked with quotation. Its theme is religious vocation; one can imagine a great novel on such a subject, but the treatment of it in Miss Wilkes' book is nowhere more than sketchy. The heroine, Lucy Armyne, receives, at various moments during childhood and adolescence, mystical apprehensions which crystallise into a religious calling; she completes her university days (having had a mild love affair with the consciousness that it must not last long) and retires to a convent, where she takes her vows; after ten years of doubt she runs away, only to return two days later. "I am coming back . . . not because I want to, nor because I love God; but because I am beaten. I cannot escape."

Miss Wilkes clearly knows her material; the theological strands are neatly tied up, dealing dispassionately with passion; we can follow, as we cannot always follow Mr. Williams. But the crises themselves, and the picture of the heroine, are so flimsy in their execution that we cannot grasp them. The moments of illumination which are of such importance to Lucy are so baldly stated, and we are so casually left either to like or to lump them, that we find ourselves accepting nothing at all. In real life it is possible to believe and to accept of a religious friend such brief hints and explanations and laments at insufficiency. But we want to know more of the people in a book than we want to know of our friends; or, at any rate, we need to.

HENRY REED.

SILLY SYMPHONIES

Beethoven: Life of a Conqueror. By EMIL LUDWIG. Translated by GEORGE STEWART MCMANUS. *Hutchinson.* 21*s.*

Tchaikovsky: A Short Biography. By GERALD ABRAHAM. *Duckworth.* 5*s.*

Of Men and Music. By MOSCO CARNER. *Joseph Williams.* *8s. 6d.*

Ten Composers. By NEVILLE CARDUS. *Cape.* *8s. 6d.*

If you want to entertain a musical gathering (I don't mean pros., just ordinary sensible concert-goers), read aloud some of those passages from Herr Ludwig's latest book which describe the music of Beethoven. In fact, it is quite a good parlour game to make your listeners guess from the descriptions what piece of music is being described. We start with an easy one:

> The Emperor appears, mounted on his charger. Short chords sound like army commands; the thunder turns to salvos. Again we hear tender hopes, laments, even the accusation that all this, hero and war, are signs of madness. Too late! They assemble from all sides, and gallop out, filling the land and the world. The conqueror has found himself and will never lose himself again.

Eroica? First movement? Quite right; but what do you make of this?

> Crowds of people appear from all sides in a sort of march rhythm through a wooded scene on their way to a holy hill. Suddenly a Dionysian darkness descends; mysterious, stifled sounds interrupt the bright, streaming swarm; the basses roll and groan; the 'cellos rise and fall; all is secret and sinister, continuing on the same rhythmic, dissecting tones wrapped in a soft minor key, indicative of happiness and full of secret calls, of horn without the hunter. Blue is the pervading colour

(*Solution:* First movement of the *Seventh* Symphony.) Or this?

> The gods are visiting the earth in disguise for village dance festival. They do not betray themselves; they only smile; but the mortal dancer take fright at the presence of the invisible gods The dancing slows down; they listen and come t a halt.

(*Solution: Allegretto* of the Eighth.)

Perhaps you think that Herr Ludwig is conten to make the symphonies look silly? Not at all chamber music comes in for caresses just sticky. Listen to this:

> Both sexes are represented in a love struggle the one tries to ensnare the other, to surpass, t cheat, and then overtake him again.

(*Solution:* First movement of the *Kreutze Sonata.*) And lastly this:

> A king appears, ready for action although he i fully aware of the difficulties ahead. The ol desire for grace, for love, soon stirs within him and ends with a tender questioning.

(*Solution:* First movement of the *E flat Quartet* Op. 127.)

Granted that Beethoven's music is seldom altogether abstract and often possesses some sor of a "meaning," it is nevertheless one of the mos delicate problems in æsthetics to say in wha precisely the "meaning" consists. (For thos who wish to explore the curious, uncharted no-man's-land between music, ethics and metaphysics, I would recommend J. W. N. Sullivan's little book on Beethoven.) One thing, however is evident: whatever the "meaning" of Beethoven symphony may be, it is not to be expressed in these banal day-dreams, which remind one of nothing so much as a succession of "classical" *tableaux vivants* at a non-stop revue. Wha a disaster it would be if Walt Disney should com upon a copy of this book!

Worthless then? No, not quite. If you ca ignore all the fal-lal about the music and concentrate on the biography, you will find a narrative rather highly coloured, it is true, and not fre from error, but full of life, enthusiasm an variety; and backed, I should say, by a good dea of reading. As a popular life of Beethoven it i a job well done. But then comes the problem: to whom can it be safely recommended? N musician could endure the nonsense, while thos who *can* endure it are likely to do a lasting injur to their apprehension of music if they take i seriously: I can imagine some earnest, misguided soul sitting through a concert trying hard to *se* what Herr Ludwig depicts. The only prope solution would be for author and publisher t produce an abridged version containing nothing but the life. But, of course, all these questions are purely academic. The book will sell like Bird's Custard.

Diametrically opposite in almost every respec to the torrential Ludwig is Mr. Gerald Abraham's excellent and concise Life of Tchaikovsky. He is allowed next to no room for a critical discussion of the music; which is a pity, for, considering the prodigious vogue of this composer, ther is remarkably little worth reading about him i English—or indeed, I believe, in any languag except Russian. No composer, says Mr. Abraham was more interesting as a man: perhaps it would be truer to say, as a study in abnormal psycholog and its artistic implications. A strange being lovable but unhappy, frank and yet deceitful Soviet Russia has made a cult of Tchaikovsky and honours him with splendid performances o his operas (almost unknown here) and monumental editions of his works and correspondence but it would be hard to imagine anyone of whom the average puritanical young Communist would more heartily disapprove were he now alive. Th neurotic melancholy; the bouts of secret drinking; the nostalgia; the disastrous marriage ("of homosexual to a nymphomaniac"), which nearl cost him his reason and drove him to a typicall half-hearted attempt at suicide; that queer, prolonged "intimacy" with a rich patroness whom he would do anything in the world to avoid meet g—how deficient it all is in "fundamentally ptimistic Socialist Realism"! How unlike the ome life of Dmitry Shostakovich, who is tre- endously good at A.R.P., and never (we are told) eels so happy as when he is wedged tight in a heering football crowd!

Mr. Abraham's book disappoints only in the ense that one wishes there were more of it; and uch the same may be said of Dr. Mosco Carner's collected essays. Let us hope that his usy career as a conductor will soon allow him e leisure to turn some of these papers into the ooks for which they are obviously sketches. Of e long series of original essays on Puccini and Mahler he admits as much; and very valuable the esult will be, for Dr. Carner is a thorough usical scholar and talks admirable sense on a ide variety of subjects. One of his most inter- sting papers examines Mahler's rescoring of the Schumann symphonies. It is really high time we eard some of these versions performed; cannot Dr. Carner himself oblige?

It is the charm of Mr. Cardus that, although a rofessional music critic of many years' standing, e still manages to retain so much of the infec- ous enthusiasm of the amateur. He ought not resent such a comment, for he quotes with elish Mr. Ernest Newman's remark: "You now, as a music critic, you labour under a erious disadvantage. . . . You *like* music, my ear man, actually like it. It will be the ruin f you." This sally introduces one of the best f his essays, a long defence of Wagner's powers s *a composer*, which could not be more timely; or if in the nineteenth century Wagner was raised for every unmusical reason under the sun, e is now dismissed for reasons equally unmusical —for example, the admiration of Adolf Hitler. This is a most recommendable book: the general eader who wants a not too technical introduction several of the leading composers of the nine- eenth and early twentieth centuries will find in Mr. Cardus a stimulating and most attractive uide.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

MY UNCLE NAT

itting on the Fence. By NATHANIEL GUBBINS. Selected by Leonard Russell. *Penguin 9d.*

If Mr. Nathaniel Gubbins, launching his olumn fourteen years ago, had been asked to rovide a pseudonym, he couldn't have chosen a etter one than Nathaniel Gubbins. He started with the right name; he went on (it must appear to the retrospective eye) in the perfect setting. Luck or cunning had placed him in a suburb, married him off, given him daughters, given him a thirst, introduced him to hen coops, bar bores, petunias and cats. It even found him an editor willing to let him expand. He dug himself into the minds of the Sunday morning public. Then came the war. Hard lines on the columnist? But Mr. Gubbins was both funnier and more aware than his rivals. He had never been indiscriminately amusing; black-outs, rationing, the kitchen sink, the Home Guard provided him with an obvious extension of his field, but he developed also an innocent-seeming manner that could convey strong doses of satire. One wasn't, perhaps, always sure at first how to take him. Those bar monologues, those party impromptus—they were brilliant, and they were boring; often the mixture of the two seemed equivocal. How far did Mr. Gubbins participate? Was he scornful, open-eared, indifferent or what? Gradually (I was in those days only a very occasional reader) one gauged his seriousness, discounted his failings: here was an ironist who sometimes warmed to his voices and was sometimes chilled by them, and one preferred him warm.

The surface was always easy. Except for Wodehouse, I doubt if there was any writer in the pre-war years as funny. A similar inspired chance seems to recommend both. The Wodehouse fairy-tale ended—I don't want to be ungenerous—in disgrace; there was no reason why a gadfly fantasy, faced with a moral choice, should have turned out otherwise. The distinction I wish to make is that Mr. Gubbins's world, however goofy in appearance, is firmly rooted in wit and sense. His writing, like his name, distils extravagant fact. He is a moralist, with views we can share, with an uncommon knack. In an emergency one can imagine him, not giving in, but hatching a masterpiece of the order of *The Good Soldier Schweik* or *Fontamara*. From "Things to Come."

> The war was over, and in the House of Commons, where there was a new Prime Minister, they were asking questions about Hitler.
>
> The Hon. Member for Little Tiddley: Is it not a fact that Hitler, despite wartime promises of the Government that all war criminals should be tried and punished, is now the darling of London's smart set and the richest man in the world?
>
> The Prime Minister: Any man who is world famous and also the richest man in the world is in danger of being the darling of the smart set. (Laughter.) . . .
>
> The Hon. Member for Little Tiddley: Is the Prime Minister aware that the fact that Hitler has not been hanged is the cause of deep bitterness in the country?
>
> The Prime Minister: No, sir. I am not.

Too true, as Mr. Gubbins would say. And in another passage he boasts lightly of having warned his readers against Nazis and preached the poor old League for years, which I can well believe. The point isn't that Mr. Gubbins has humane views, though that is a blessing, but that his fun couldn't exist without them. In this book, a selection from his pieces during the war, he satirises politicians, astrologers, dog-loving, business first, Mr. Morrison, middle-class women, the man in the street: sacred stupidities, some of them. He never squeezes himself for a joke, preferring to be matter-of-fact: admirable trait in a humorist! Where the gramophone disc of talkers ceases to be funny and becomes drably literal it is impossible to say; one shades off unnoticeably into the other. It pays in the long run. His bar colloquies, his housekeeping, his Homeguarding, his open hatch and disgruntled stomach, his stoical bad temper are an intermittent delight, and there is a solid residue to the froth. They go on when he has left off. He hasn't, like so many laugh-extractors, sacrificed everything to contortion.

Mr. Gubbins writes, as a rule, to a very short length—500 words roughly—and in a few forms which he works admirably. His conversation pieces are unexcelled in their way: as distinctively patterned as, say, an Osbert Lancaster cartoon. It is a pity to break any of these dialogues by quotation, because each, like a ballade, has a beginning, a middle and an end, and the repetitions tell; but here is his "Shelter Conversation 2." An old turn? Mr. Gubbins is fresh as a daisy:

> "Vot vos dot?"
>
> "Dot vos a bompf."
>
> "All der time dere iss bompfs."
>
> "Ven vill der war over be?"
>
> "For dot question asking Hermann to der concentration camp yesterday vos sent. Heil, Hitler."
>
> "Heil, Hitler."
>
> "To-night ve vill again der liddle joke make und der merry games play. Dere vos a very fonny joke vich ask vy in der desert a man does not hongry go."
>
> "Vell, vy in der desert a man does not hungry go?"
>
> "A man in der desert does not hongry go because of der sand vich in der desert iss."
>
> "Poddon?"
>
> "I repeat dot a man in der desert does not

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hungry go because of der sand vich in der desert iss. Der sandvich in der desert iss."

"Dot very fonny vos. Heil, Hitler."

"Heil, Hitler." . . .

"Der newspaper Diplomatische und Politische Damrubbische say dot by to-morrow der Jugo-Slavs in der Greater Reich vill be."

"Der Diplomatische Damrubbische und Politische mit Gibberische und Sauerkraut say dot by der next day der Turks in der Greater Reich vill be."

"Der Diplomatischedamgibberische und Politischedamrubbische mit Sauerkraut und Saussische Stuffed mit Garbische say dot by der day after all der Balkans in der Greater Reich vill be. Heil, Hitler."

"Heil, Hitler."

"Vot vos dot?"

"Dot vos a bompf."

"Und dot und dot?"

"Dot vos more bompfs."

"All der time dere iss bompfs."

At his best a lyrical abandon touches these colloquies (true of Wodehouse, too). Mr. Gubbins sings, out of the marshes of Fleet Street, the rockeries of suburbia, and we get to recognise the warbler: taciturn, bald-headed, red-nosed, a fugitive, happy among a row of glasses on a counter. His pictures of domestic life—one remembers deadlocks, politenesses, a household of women groaning under the 'flu—are delightfully equivocal. He has ingenious ways of stalking himself, of developing a third-person personality. No more touching portrait of the middle-class, middle-aged Englishman in wartime has enlivened our gloom.

G. W. STONIER

OUTSIDE STORY

The First War Correspondent, William Howard Russell, of "The Times." By RUPERT FURNEAUX. *Cassell, 12s. 6d.*

This is the story of a great Victorian, told in the Victorian manner; rather like a Raeburn portrait, a dour narrative of a career. Mr. Furneaux is an accurate and conscientious biographer, and half his book consists of excerpts from Russell's own despatches and letters. We have the inside story of everything except Russell, whose failings his biographer condones by touching on them lightly—failings with which he sympathises, but which one feels he only partly understands.

The outside story is fascinating enough. Russell's journey to the Crimea, reporting Balaclava and Sebastopol, crusading for human conditions for the troops; his tussles for recognition for himself from Lord Raglan's staff:

> At the Alma I was "unattached," and most thoroughly uncomfortable I was. I was never in a more unpleasant position. . . . It could scarcely be a recognised or legitimate business for any man to ride in front of the army in order that he might be able to write an account of a battle for a newspaper. I was a very fly in amber.

His next assignment was the Indian Mutiny; by this time he was a byword, a menace to the hypocrites and jingoes. Then came the American Civil War, where his bitter despatch on the Northerners' retreat at Bull Run led to attacks on him in the press and insults in Washington and in public. In the face of the storm he had raised he could do nothing, so he came home.

His editor Delane sent him to accompany the German Army in the war of 1870, when for the first time the war correspondent's job resembled that of Russell's successors of to-day. In the Crimea, in India, in America, he had been less concerned with competition from other newspapers, but he had never been entirely accepted by the Army. In 1870 he was accredited, received, his opinions asked by the military commanders. But now he had rivals. Every battle and siege had to be reported before the other papers got their stories home. The *Times* chartered a channel steamer to bring Russell's despatches to London ahead of the *Daily News*. He had to find out what was going to happen and to adjust his style to the new medium of the telegraph.

On his memorial in St. Paul's is written "the first and greatest of war correspondents." The first he was beyond doubt. The conditions of war, of communications and of journalism have changed too much for the second claim to be fairly judged. But this he had in common with the greatest newspapermen—he was more than an accurate reporter. He was, within the limits his craft imposed, an imaginative writer, and something of a leader as well. He spoke out for the oppressed, for those who could not speak for themselves, for the slaves in America, for the natives in India, for the troops in the Crimea, where he became something of a myth to those men who, before his despatches had made their mark, had been thought of as the riff-raff of the country. Even when he himself acquired authority he had none of his generation's negative and compromising reverence for it.

That is the success-story of this enormous, humorous, irresponsible, paradoxically tactful Irishman, the friend of Charles Dickens. But there were other things—the novels he told Delane he wanted to settle down to write, the family he hardly ever saw, the restlessness, the humiliations. "Go to the front or come home," his chief wrote to him in Canada. There is something frustrated, something swamped by the success, that makes one wish that Lytton Strachey had written the other story of this eminent Victorian.

ANTONY BROWN

Eight Lithographs. *Published by Miller's, Lewes.* £5 5s.

"Miller's" is known for the art exhibitions and concerts with which it embellishes the life of Lewes. If only every country town in England had a similar centre! But taste and energy are required, and, unluckily, these are even more difficult to find than the financial generosity that is also needed. The latest venture of Miller's deserves the most enthusiastic welcome—a portfolio of eight lithographs, by Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Caroline Lucas and E. du Plessis. Lithography is the most satisfactory form of visual art that is available to the narrow purse. A lithograph is far more satisfactory than the best of "reproductions," because the artist himself has drawn upon the stone, and no photographic mechanism intervenes. The process lends itself to peculiarly delightful and delicate effects of colour. Indeed, one wishes that all eight of the lithographs in this portfolio were coloured. Vanessa Bell's interior is at once highly personal and similar in character to some of the Vuillard lithographs that are so justly prized. Her black and white of a small child is also very happy. Duncan Grant's *Window in Toledo*, with richer colour and more solid forms, has a strength that will delight his admirers. Caroline Lucas's *Frost and Flowers* is delicious and full of poetic feeling, her *Brittany Peasant* remarkably skilful. Du Plessis's view of Tossa opens a window on to a Mediterranean village most evocatively—just what is needed to excite our happy memories and hopes. This portfolio would be the ideal present for anyone setting up a home.

Week-end Competitions

No. 788

Set by Roger Marvell

The usual prizes are offered for a verse epitaph in not more than eight lines on a pet. Entries by March 20th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 785

Set by W. R.

"In her daydreams at the Vicarage the unsophisticated Jane Austen must have imagined herself as the heroine of her novel *Emma*"—this

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Company Meeting

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY

POST-WAR POLICY

The annual general meeting of the Great Western Railway Company was held on March 7th in London.

Sir Charles J. Hambro (the chairman), in the course of his speech, said: The expectation of an early cessation of hostilities brings into prominence the need for an early decision on the question of the future of all forms of internal transport. The achievements of the railways in meeting the unprecedented demands made upon them during the war are an eloquent tribute to the efficiency of their organisations and to the high pre-war standard at which their lines and equipment were maintained. Our view, therefore, is that the main-line railways should continue as four separate entities and that co-ordination of all forms of internal transport should be effected in such a way as to secure to users as far as practicable a free choice of alternative facilities, with competition on a fair basis.

After the cessation of hostilities our first consideration must be the overtaking of the heavy arrears of maintenance which have accumulated during the many years of war. We are anxious not only to restore the pre-war standards of passenger and freight traffic at the earliest possible date, but also to introduce many improvements. We have in contemplation a large programme for the construction of new locomotives and carriages over a period of five years, and, in carrying out this work, many improvements will be incorporated. Our programme includes new and up-to-date designs, more comfortable carriages with more attractive upholstery and improved lighting, better buffet, dining and sleeping cars, etc., our aim being to provide the public with the finest service in the world.

The rapidity with which we can carry out those long-term programmes must necessarily depend upon our being able to secure an adequate supply of labour and materials.

RATES, FARES AND CHARGES

The provisions of the Railway Control Agreement provide for the continuance of control for a minimum period of one year after the cessation of hostilities, and, before it comes to an end, time is to be given for the operation of any statutory machinery governing the level of rates, fares and charges. The post-war level of charges will, of course, depend on the company's traffics and costs, and these are obviously matters for speculation. The present earnings of the Railways do not afford any guide to the probable post-war position. They are largely derived from wartime traffic, and they benefit in consequence of the existence of restrictions which, although justified now, would not be tolerated in normal times, particularly in the case of passenger traffic.

Equally, our receipts in the years immediately before the war cannot be regarded as indicative of the probable post-war earnings. We anticipate considerable benefit from increased employment, the arrangements proposed under the Distribution of Industry Bill, and the development of holiday and tourist traffic. On the expenditure side the cost of salaries, wages and of materials, which prior to the war represented nearly 90 per cent. of our total expenditure, has increased considerably. While, as I have said, we hope for an improvement in our post-war earnings, I think it well to point out that on the quantum of traffic which we carried in the years immediately preceding the war, the pre-war level of our charges would have to be raised by about 50 per cent. to cover the increased costs and yield the pre-war net revenue, and by about 60 per cent. to give us our standard revenue.

The report was adopted.

innocent remark by a dramatic critic in the *Evening Standard* would amuse Miss Austen in the Elysian Fields. Competitors are invited to provide her comments, in not more than 200 words.

Report by W. R.

It is only charitable to presume that the critic had never read a novel by Miss Austen, for ignorance can be removed, but no treatment yet discovered could help a person who, having read this terrifyingly acute author, supposed her to be an unsophisticated daydreamer. L. E. J. ends delightfully—"But I think it very ill-natured of him to speak of Papa's Rectory as a Vicarage. A Rectory is no more a Vicarage than Maple Grove was Hartfield. And if I am to acquit your critic of ill-nature, it can only be, to be sure, if you tell me that 'innocent' should have been spelled 'ignorant.'" But he wrecks his entry by sharing the critic's assumption that *Emma* was written by a girl. Other notably good entries came from Tahnitt, Granville Garley, R. S. P. Hewison, but I recommend that the prize money be divided between Allan M. Laing, F. Keyworth, A. T. G., Able Seaman J. R. Till, and William Bliss. I must add that Mr. Laing makes Miss Austen speak rather sharply of her favourite heroine, and that I do not believe her when she says, through Mr. Bliss, that she would certainly not have married Mr. Darcy.

My Dear Cassandra,

The gentleman's notion of my daydreams is excessively diverting to my unsophisticated mind. He should have called them nightmares; but I am thankful to say that they have never disturbed my rest by day or night. I do not want to dream of anything happier than being myself. You will not believe that by this I mean no improvement is possible in your Jane—I am, I hope, as sensible as anyone else of my failings—but I do not wish any character but my own. Of course I am far from denying that I sometimes envy the good qualities in my feminine creations, as well as regret my share of their bad ones. Eliza Bennet could add to my good sense; a touch of Marianne Dashwood's romantic nature might help me to a rich husband; I have, alas, little of the patient resignation of Anne Elliot; but I really believe Emma Woodhouse has nothing to offer me that I have not got already, or would wish to have. I suppose I must be grateful that this critic did not imagine me pining to be little Fanny Price. . . . ALLAN M. LAING

Extract from a letter from Jane Austen to one of her nieces.

. . . That was the substance of the remark. Is it not amusing? It came from the year 1945 and was brought to us by our neighbour Mr. Russell. He is an amiable young man, but grown into such a rattle, and is for ever flying up and down the centuries in search of gossip.

Cassandra and I were so diverted that I called to life Emma and Mr. Knightley themselves and we laughed over it together a full half-hour. At last Emma said, "Ah, my dear Miss Austen, it is fortunate you were not able to live my life, for though you would have made none of my stupid blunders, you would have married Mr. Knightley in the first chapter and then what would have become of the novel and of me?"

After I had dismissed them, I fell to thinking how this remark could have been made. At first I could make nothing of it, but later it occurred to me that to a man living in 1945 *all* maiden ladies living in country parsonages and writing novels in the previous century must appear very much alike. No doubt he was confusing me with Miss Brontë. Can you imagine it? But I have no doubt that it was so.

By the by, I went to visit her last month. Dear Charlotte! I fear she will never really overcome her earthly dislike of me. However, I had a very pleasant stay. But oh, the wind on those moors!

And now, my dear, I have some news of greater importance. Captain Wentworth and I . . . .

F. KEYWORTH

This critic seems to assume that because a writer is a woman, she must be young, and because her father was a clergyman she must be unsophisticated. Even though, in the opinion of many men, youth and silliness are necessary qualities of an attractive woman, I find it a queer kind of gallantry to attribute them to me at an age when I had ceased to lay claim to either. It is hard to be told that I dreamed of myself as Emma Woodhouse, when I allowed her none of the indulgence which authors of either sex commonly show to their heroines. Perhaps, when I was young, I did a little identify myself with Elizabeth Bennet, but I no more imagined myself to be Emma Woodhouse than Walter Scott thought he was Lord Marmion. Really, the critic is as careless of truth and probability as the author of a German play, and I begin to fear for his reason. Is it possible that he has confused me with my sister author of a later age, the clergyman's daughter who wrote *Jane Eyre*? A. T. G.

It is a characteristic of critics to detect lack of candour in a writer whose sole concern is with the simple, the rational and the amusing. That the error should have arisen over *Emma* was in part due to myself. Emma's faults, which appear to have been many, were such as commonly result from inexperience. One might expect to find them in a country vicarage, though not perhaps in Maple Grove.

Yet when I described my heroine as one whom no one but myself would much like I was not aware that charity should be taken for self-love, or admiration as an avowal of wilfulness and interference in the affairs of others. Emma is the child of my fancy, not the foster-parent of my hopes. It was not to my heroine that I gave the name of Jane.

As for my hero, I own I could be partial to so civil and complaisant a gentleman as Mr. Knightley; but I could hardly suppose anyone so *clever* and *discerning* to form a serious attachment for a green girl. There were times, it is true, when I imagined myself his partner in a minuet; but further than that I did not presume to go. Hampshire, no less than Surrey, is full of beauties, and Mr. Knightley would surely have made their acquaintance.

ABLE SEAMAN J. R. TILL.

I fear I can no longer continue to believe that my admirers, the Janeites—I have long ago forgiven the familiarity in consideration of the compliment—must *all* be persons of unusual intelligence and discrimination. For, though there is no doubt something of me in all my heroines, Emma Woodhouse should be, to any understanding reader, almost the last of them to be taken for what I was or, in my youthful daydreams, I aspired to be.

I was never, I hope, quite so self-sufficient a young woman as I made her to be; nor so busy to order other peoples' lives; nor so inveterate a match-maker. In real life, that is to say, I satisfied that feminine passion in my novels. Nor, though we are all egoists, do I think I was quite so complacent a one as she.

If I were made to say which of my heroines I would have wished to be, the choice would lie between those of my first two books, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey*, and—does it surprise you?—I think I would desire to be Catherine Morland rather than Elizabeth Bennet. Though my mind tells me I was more like Elizabeth, in my heart I would prefer the simplicity and charm of Catherine to the wit and sense of Lizzie. And I would certainly never have married Darcy; though I believe I was half-way in love with Henry Tilney when I created him.

WILLIAM BLISS

P.S.—If I were permitted a postscript I would add that since *Emma* was nearly the last book I wrote and I was then some 37 years of age, I could scarce be called "unsophisticated," and must be supposed to have ceased daydreaming. Further, that *Emma* was *not* written at Steventon *Rectory* but at Chawton, my father being then many years dead.

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